

AUDIO DRUDGE

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AUDIO DRUDGE
ISSUE 7

CONTRASTATE

TGVT

CAUL

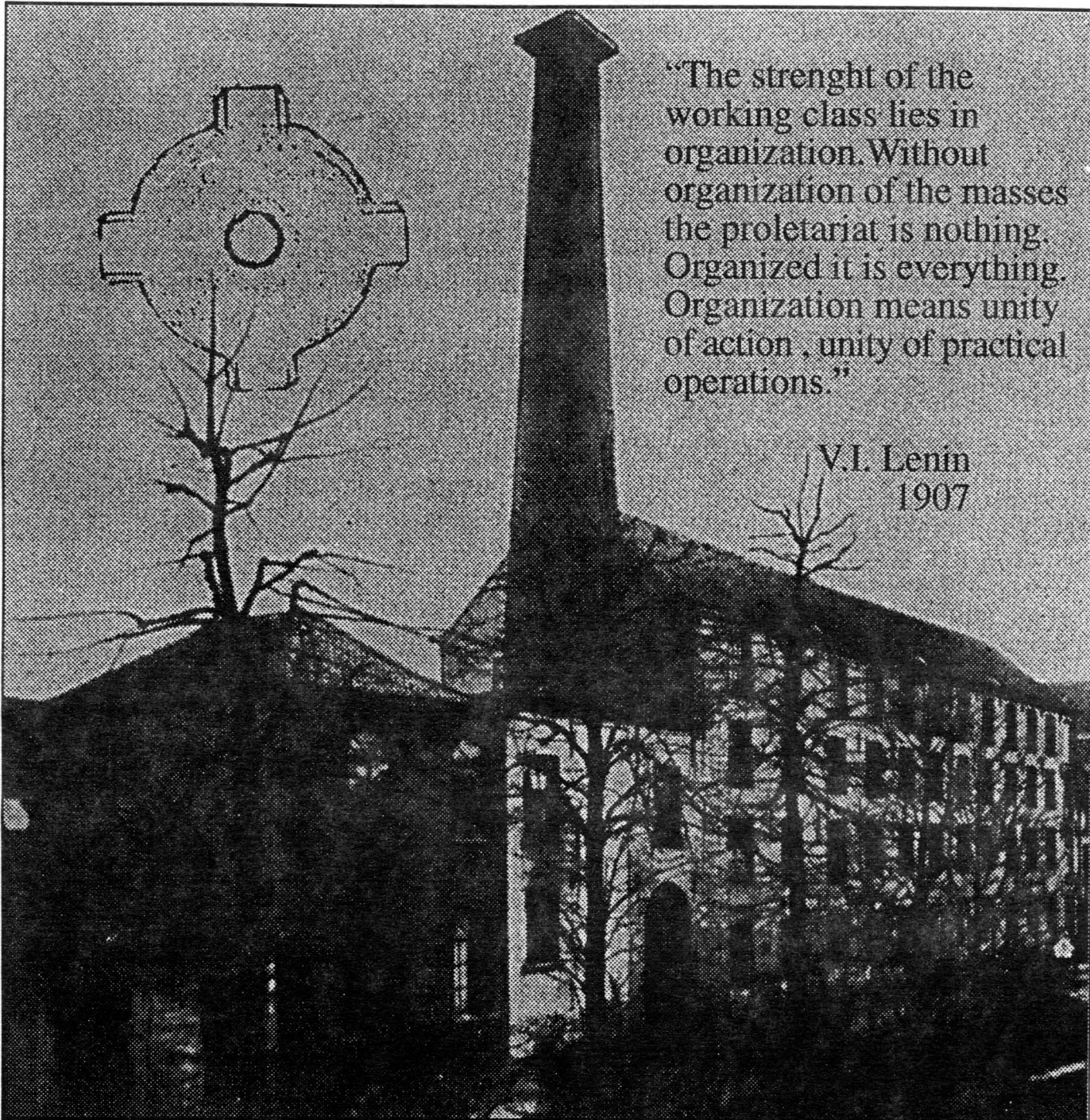
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operations."

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1907

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Gratitude: All featured bands and contributors, advertisers, distributors, labels and artists who send their promotional material (sorry we can't review everything!), and especially consumers for all their support and kind words. Also thanks to Ares Solis, Stefan Knappe, Phil Easter, and as always, the formidable talent that is Stefan Alt.

Next Issue (tentative!): A "Focus on Sweden" with Deutsch Nepal, Stratum Terror, and Megaptera, plus Law, Orphx, Allegory Chapel Ltd. (Pt. II), The Grey Wolves, Endura, and label profiles on Old Europa Cafe, and Ant-Zen. Plus the usual input from dAS and who knows what else? I'm feeling overworked just thinking about it.

To keep abreast of upcoming issues and happenings at Malignant please write and add yourself to the mailing list (which automatically gets you our catalogue of dark ambient and power electronic releases. We're small, but we're cheap!). Upcoming releases: Orphx CD, Inade 10", Bacillus 7", and the long awaited resurface of Stone Glass Steel!

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MUSIC

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Shaitan

Caul

Descent

Oblivion Ensemble

An. Act.Of. You.

Side B

Contrastate

My Body

T.G.V.T.

White Dawn

Tesendalo

Zeitwort

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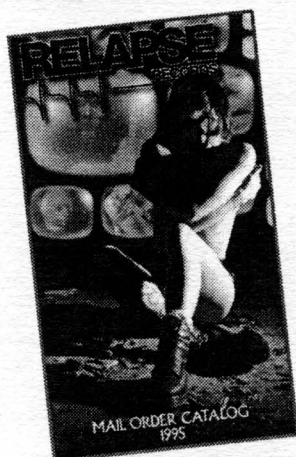
So, here we are into the 7th Issue already. Been a real bear this one, too many things to review and not enough listening time basically. A computer meltdown in late May sure as hell didn't help matters much, but after spending gobs of money and sweating it out for a couple days not knowing if the zine had been saved or not, things were put back into their rightful place and I could proceed at the normal snails pace. As you can see, I've added a host of new writers to help take some of the burden off my shoulders....were it not for them surely this issue would have been a heck of lot shorter and a lot more delayed. As it stands, many things still could not be reviewed, but then there's only so many you can do before burnout becomes inevitable and insanity starts to creep in. Lately I've been trying to remember just what it was like when I could just listen to music and not have a million adjectives or descriptive sentences running through my head, but I found it couldn't be done. I ask for no pity of course, I wouldn't do it if I still didn't like it to some small degree. At any rate, you'll also notice a higher degree of positive reviews this issue, and that's because I'd rather delete or just not review the things that I felt didn't really warrant attention rather than have them take up unnecessary space.

At any rate, I'm darn proud of this issue...it's come along way since those early, rather heinous experiments. If you're among the few that happen to have copies of anything before issue 3, it's my recommendation you bury them in the backyard where few eyes will ever lay witness to them again. Keep the tapes though, 'cause they're still pretty cool (I think at least). While I'm on the subject of back issues, please note that I am completely sold out of everything!! And no, I don't offer subscriptions for various reasons, and I lack the space to go into details.

Issue 8 may not see the light of day until this time next year, but then, a year between issues seems to be the trend. Until then, send comments etc. Jason, Baltimore, August 1996

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5751 TERMINAL ABSOLUTION	\$16	Extremely limited edition in odd packaging. Act quick. Must be 18!					5637 COSMIC BONDAGE	\$25	5437 SPLIT 10"	\$14
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THIRD GLOBAL VAGINA TORTURE

With just two CDs released within a five year period, Germany's T.G.V.T. could never be accused of being prolific. Personal problems and internal conflicts have forced line-up changes and taken a toll on the band, but they persist and continue to forge ahead despite the roadblocks placed before them to impede their progress. Recent tracks on Ant-Zen's *Oktagon* compilation LP show them evolving into an entity more vital than ever before, building elaborate pieces of demanding, spiritually bent percussion, and swarthy, mysterious atmospheres. T.G.V.T. are explorers in a foreign world, staking claim and mapping new territory with each new composition. While their contributions still remain relatively unrecognized in the U.S., nothing this good ever stays a secret for long. Their day will come, and when it does I promise I won't say I told you so! The following interview was done via mail.

AD: The obligatory first question...a brief history of T.G.V.T., its current members, its evolution from the early days of *Soft Disgust* and *Clearing Operation* etc?

TGVT: T.G.V.T. today are Thomas Kriszt, Stefan Rapp, and Ralf Transier (under the pseudonyms T. Kriszt, S. Milavoon, and R. Kisleva) Jorg Waffenschmidt ("Jakob Lorber") left the band last year. He and R. Transier were the founders of *Clearing Operation*. This band was changed into *Soft Disgust* after S. Rapp had come to the band (in 1985). At that time, our sound was influenced by those groups who are already "classics" of Industrial today, such as S.P.K., *Throbbing Gristle* etc. In 1991 we changed our name into T.G.V.T. The reason was that we had reached a kind of crisis: we decided to make a new beginning with a new project name. After recording *Rinde Humano* in Summer 1991 T. Kriszt joined the group.

AD: Rhythm, sexuality, and spirituality all seem to be components of your work...is there a general philosophy behind T.G.V.T., themes you prefer to work around? Any particular culture that interests you the most?

TGVT: Theory or philosophy is not the right word. But there are indeed topics which we prefer. Beside the components you mentioned, probably violence is an important keyword. We consider ourselves as an Ethno-Industrial band. That is to say, we combine the "classical" themes of the genre, and expand on them in a sense of global interaction. We try to show relationships: apparent opposites shall be questioned by applying our key-components on documented historical or present examples, which may stem from various cultures. So, it is less a particular culture which we are interested in, but all the basic elements, which

are common to all cultures, repeating themselves in all cultures again and again.

AD: *Terra Lingua* seemed to be an expansion, as well it should be, of what was covered on *Rinde Humano*...more exploratory, more clearly defined...how would you compare these two releases and how does it compare to what you're doing now and see yourself doing in the near future?

TGVT: *Rinde Humano* was in fact still more commercial, it still showed more conventional structures, at least with some tracks, which sounded more or less like "Dark Wave". Compared to this, *Terra Lingua* is closer to noise; the atmospheric, slowly growing sound treatments are to some extent the result of Thomas' influence, who joined the

to be some of the best material you're recorded yet...a fair reflection of some of your newest works and direction? Do you feel you're still evolving and maturing as a group?

TGVT: The *Oktagon* tracks are in fact a mirror of our more current work: we do hope that we're still evolving and getting more perfect. Many details in our music, such as looping and working with voice samples, which we couldn't realize before because we lacked the equipment, are now possible.

AD: Do you feel you've developed a definitive T.G.V.T. sound?

TGVT: We hope so! I would be nice if our audience could recognize a specific T.G.V.T. sound as our way of expression. In any case, we do not orientate ourselves at specific standards or examples, but of course this doesn't mean subsequently that we provide "the" one typical "T.G.V.T. sound" to others....

AD: Your very name itself is somewhat provocative, as are many of the images you utilize...and yet, I don't quite get the same aggressive tones in your music (though its dark and evocative nature is hard to ignore). Tell me a little bit about the name itself, and also how the images play into your music?

TGVT: The band name was provided by J Lorber, who isn't with T.G.V.T. anymore. As some critics did, we considered the name being a sort of positive ugly; a mixture out of monstrous and aggressive. To put it another way: the name may effect many different associations, but it is not easy to connect with a certain kind of musical intention.

AD: In the liner notes of *Terra Lingua* you write that it "provides the genetic sound code of the inner cinema/its transmission of soul may function as the gate to our dreams and desires..." expand on this if you would, particularly the idea of the inner cinema.

TGVT: We are quite interested in the relationship between dreams and reality. With some of our tracks we try to create our own reality within the limits of our dreams and desires. With the trance of certain sounds and patterns that are involved in our compositions we try to bring the omnipresent reality of our dreams and feelings into communications with the audience. If the listener is based on the same dreams and desires our stimuli will be connected to his "inner cinema". He will link with our way of expression. This may result in a new form of interactive relationship.

OVER.....

AD: I found the three tracks on the *Oktagon* comp



T.G.V.T.

AD: I know that most of your music is improvised, but do you conceive the works (ie have a general idea of what you want to do) before recording them? Describe the recording process for T.G.V.T. as far as what members contribute what, the set-up etc... how does it compare to what you do in live performances?

TGVT: Though we play the single tracks of a song in an improvised way, the basic elements are usually planned. We start with a sort of "material search" and selection. If a basic idea for a song has been found, we do the basic-part recordings (i.e. rhythms, loops, etc). When doing this, we have already quite a concrete idea of what shall be expressed by the song, and what kind of atmosphere shall be transmitted. Of course, spontaneous ideas flow into the arrangement and are realized in an improvised way. The basic parts (mostly the sequenced parts) however, are more composed and/or edited afterwards.

There is no fixed disposition of the functions within the group. It always depends on the individual song, what one contributes to it, but each of the group members has his individual strengths, such as sampling, recording, lyrics, voice, acoustic treatments....

We really use too much equipment to list it here completely; we would say that our most important "instruments" are the TV and radio: they are like a cornucopia (thanks dictionary!), providing sound and picture raw material, which is transformed then into loops, samples, or voice cuts. Most of the acoustic instruments, which can be identified as such instruments on our recordings are in fact real played, either real time or for sampling them.

For live performances, we use a DAT, which contains the basics of the songs. Most of the acoustic instruments, such as flutes, percussion, and voices of course are played live. By this separation, the songs get their own live characteristics, but on the other hand, they can be reproduced clearly. We usually do the mixing ourselves on stage as putting the mixing into the hands of the local PA-crew has always been quite unsatisfactory. Most of them know best how to mix a good sound for a rock-band, but have never heard anything about how industrial music should sound on stage.

AD: On "Motherfatherblood'nguts" you use a sample talking about Bosnia...tell me a bit about the song and symbolism of the title?

TGVT: The song was developed around the recording of a BBC-radio broadcast about Bosnia. It was made very spontaneously, and we completed it with noise-samples. The title of course is very cynical and shall emphasize the effect. Mother-father is a symbol for all the misery and the violence that strikes especially the people of Bosnia and destroys their families. "Guts" is simply a metaphor for all the cruelties that repeat themselves every day: the reports about those cruelties in former Yugoslavia contain all the details of the violence, which are already documented in very old traditions. Try to think of the song just as symbol for the constant repetition of barbarism in our so-called civilized world.

AD: What's the current situation for T.G.V.T....did you sever your relationship with Hyperium, or was that just a rumor I heard? What label can we expect the next T.G.V.T. to be

released on and when do you expect it to be released?

TGVT: At the time, it is still totally uncertain where we will release our next CD. Our relationship with Hyperium is not severed but meanwhile Hyperium doesn't seem to be a suitable label for our music. In addition, this relationship was not very satisfactory for us, at least from the economic aspect. Of course, you can't earn a lot of money with independent music like ours, but on the other hand we're thinking about producing the next CD completely by ourselves. The only thing we can say so far is that we really hope to release the next CD within 1996.

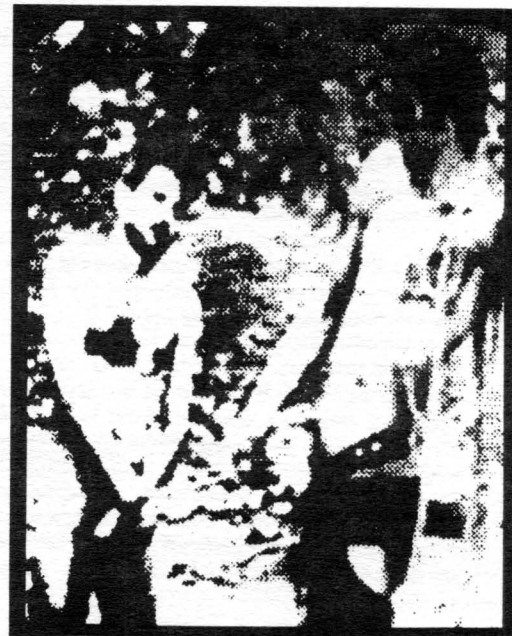
AD: Being a trio, obviously you're of a similar mind set when it comes to your music, but do certain songs reflect varying personalities within the group?

TGVT: Well, we're mostly of similar mind when it comes to T.G.V.T., but not always...this is one of the answers for what you asked in a previous question! But, basically, we have a similar interest in sound and music, with personal preferences, such as atmospheres (Kriszt), percussion and loops (Kisleva), and ambient (Milavoon). Or so....

AD: There was quite a time span between your first and second CDs, why such a long period of time and will we see a more active T.G.V.T. in the future?

TGVT: After the first CD, when T. Kriszt had joined the band it took awhile to find a common way of expression. After completing the master tape for *Terra Lingua* in May 1993 Rough Trade stopped releasing until 1994 (that is what Hyperium told us at that time): you could ask why such a long period from 1993 until (hopefully) 1996. That is a difficult question: it is closely associated with a lot of the personal trouble we all had and unfortunately still have...never-the-less, the "hard core" of the band is in good shape. We shall continue.....

THIRD GLOBAL VAGINA TORTURE
CONTACT: T. Kriszt, Zwickauer Weg 2, 68309
Mörlenbach, Germany.



CAUL

I still enjoy the earlier recordings - in fact, I may try to find someone to do a "best of" CD with tracks from all three cassettes. I still think its good stuff - it's just an earlier, simpler version of what I'm doing now.

AD: In addition to *Crucible*, you also have a CD lined-up for Katyn Records...are you approaching this one any differently than you did *Crucible*?

I'm in danger of crossing the line into self-promotion here, but aside from the several tape releases and a CD just released on Malignant (*Crucible*), there's also an upcoming 7" on Washington State's Sick Muse Recordings, and another forthcoming CD for Germany's Katyn. So, you'll be seeing a lot of Brett Smith's work from a variety of sources outside of Malignant, and what better way to introduce him than through these pages? Epic, forlorn, spiritual, dark, mature, and cinematic are just a few of the many words that spring to mind when listening to Caul. The following was done via e-mail.

AD: Going beyond how it's presented to the public, do you think there's a difference between music that's made specifically for film and music, such as yours, that's just plain visually evocative (or filmic as it were)?

C: I haven't done any soundtracks (yet! - anybody interested?) but there seems to be some fundamental differences, the greatest being that, in doing a soundtrack, you're trying to complement another artist's work. You're trying to create music to accompany an already existing project that's not yours, whereas somebody such as myself is more interested in perhaps creating soundtracks for impressions on places they've been (or haven't been!), emotions, stories etc. I really don't do any of these things myself, so I'm just guessing. There are some good people doing good soundtracks whose work can easily stand on it's own, however, they're able to straddle the fence of being "background" music that has more than enough strength and quality to stand alone. Maurice Jarre (check out *Jacob's Ladder*), Mark Isham (*Fire in the Sky*, *The Beast* etc), Peter Gabriel (*Passion*, *Birdy*), Elliot Goldenthal (*Alien 3*). There are others as well. I think the reason my music sounds filmic is probably because it's abstract enough to not be a song. There aren't any lyrics, hooks, choruses, etc...it's just music, with enough noise and odd sounds thrown in to give people an opportunity to "fill in the blanks" with their own impressions, which is good....people are too used to having MTV do it for them.

AD: That's interesting you say that, because I actually find your newer material much more structured ...not as abstract as earlier works...and yet it seems more filmic than ever!

C: That's true! Things are definitely getting more structured. The material I'm currently working for Katyn Records is the most structured yet - a lot of musical pieces...yet they still have an "abstract" quality to them. I think, especially in the use of textural samples and the way that I employ them. I think that's a central part to my work and even if I eventually got to the point of doing just music, the pieces would still have that quality to them. I'm not writing pop songs or anything else like that. My music is pretty open ended, so the listener can get involved. As far as filmic goes, *Crucible* is pretty

filmic in parts, mostly the more music oriented ones. The more textural ones would work as well I think...though it would have to be a slow dark film! Something about a slowly approaching apocalypse of some kind...

AD: When you're sitting down to compose are you actually thinking in terms of visuals? In other words, are there images that go through your mind when composing?

C: I hate to disappoint you, but, no visuals at all, ever. I just connect into some weird place that feeds me this material and I'm off and running. I sometimes tap into a "feeling" of some kind, usually spiritual, but it's not as if I'm musically illustrating anything particularly definable. I'm just not a very visually oriented person (although I did the sculpture in the *Golden Section* cassette) - I operate on feelings, hunches, and secret messages...

AD: The progression from tape to tape (and tape to CD) has been pretty remarkable...do you feel you've matured as an artist over the last year or so? How do you compare what you're doing now to what you've done in the past? Your newer material seems more focused, more thoughtful, and generally more composed....are you spending longer periods of time constructing individual pieces, or is it just a matter of knowing what to do more and being able to do it better?

C: Well, for one, thanks for the compliments! I do feel I've progressed a great deal technically, I can improve the fidelity of my recordings. That makes it easier to take care of setting things up. I can then just focus on creating, which, in turn, makes the quality of my work better....I don't have to sweat the small stuff.

It seems the work I did for the *Crucible* CD is in every way a logical progression from the work I was doing. It is (as you said) more focused and thoughtful. I'm getting confident enough to slow things down and keep some tracks sparse....which, I think, reflects an increase in skill as far as organizing the elements of a track. It seems I'm spending more time on tracks and I'm getting pickier. I try not to work things to death though. A lot of my stuff is improvised and then other elements are added and some kind of organization is imposed on it. At that point, I'm still improvising though, because I rely a lot on "accidents" during mixdown.

In relation to the actual material, it's a situation of knowing less and less to some degree...as I stated earlier, I get my material from "somewhere else." This area has not been explored to a great extent yet, so the more I go there, the more it opens up and the less I know where I am. It's not like I astral travel or go into a fugue state or anything like that - not at all. But I do feel a definite connection with something... then the craftsman in me can go to work and shape what I've done.

C: Somewhat, *Crucible* was weird. When I had originally started on it (December of '94), it was to be released by another label and there was a schedule set for when it had to be done. I had used the advance money from the label to purchase a new piece of equipment to make the CD with. I unfortunately had no idea how to use this new tool. So it was a frantic time - I was trying to learn as I went, trying also to record a new CD! I think this ended up giving the music an atmosphere I couldn't have achieved had I tried! I was glad it ended up coming out on Malignant - this gave me a chance to rework some problem areas and present a better work.

The CD for Katyn (*The Sound of Faith*), is mostly made up of tracks I've been working off an on with for the last few months. I'm not sure how this is going to affect the final product

AD: You're also a member of Trust Obey...what is your role there? I imagine Caul as being a much more personal outlet for you and the approach is quite different.

C: My role in Trust Obey is guitar player. It's still as creative for me as doing Caul, just in a different manner. It's not my project for one - it's John Bergin's, but I enjoy working with John so much - I like playing the music as well and I like playing the guitar. On the rare occasion we play live, it's great to be able to play loud. The material John wrote for the *Hands of Ash* CD is just phenomenal.



People who have the early cassette releases or *The Crow* CD are definitely going to be surprised...there's nothing like it. Anyway, it does to some degree require a different approach. It's more song oriented than **Caul**. The dynamics of the working situation are great deal different -- in **Caul**, there's only one person! I just have to relate to myself. I still find myself dealing with sound in a similar manner, though. Trying to find a certain sound that fits a particular section of a song. Not so much guitar tone, but more of a "lick" oriented approach. It's hard for me to explain. In the end, it is somewhat similar to how I work on **Caul** material, mostly by feel. You just know if something's right. This all concerns the "craft aspect" of my dealings with music. One important aspect that is present in **Caul** and not in **Trust Obey** is the spiritual aspect. I think of **Caul** as primarily "religious music", which doesn't enter into **Trust Obey**. For me, **Trust Obey** is fulfilling in many ways, but not like **Caul** which comes from and is fulfilling on a spiritual level.

AD: Speaking of, the one thing I did notice about your latest material seems to exude a brighter, more spiritually bent aura... are you by nature a spiritual (not necessarily religious though) person?

C: I think you hit the nail on the head - I am a spiritual person but not a very religious one. My music definitely reflects that. I'm not, by nature, a spiritual person. For years I was a hard-core atheist (which is just another belief system, really). But after awhile, I started to feel that perhaps there was something more and I started searching. Eventually, I felt that I had answer. About the same time, **Caul** came into being and seemed to be a perfect outlet for these ideas. I don't feel as if I'm a devotional artist or whatever, but I do certainly feel

as if I'm "given" my music. Or perhaps go and get it! **Caul** basically stems from this and I think that's exactly what shapes it and, for me, makes it fulfilling. *The Sound of Faith* is the most spiritual of my recordings. I don't know if this is a progression or a trend or whatever in my work, but I think it's got quite a different feel to it as opposed to my other works. There are certainly some brighter moments on this one. There's always a dark side though. The world seems infused with sorrow and pain and I try to reflect that as well as the beauty. I don't try to concentrate on one or the other. That seems to be a narrow and unrealistic position.

AD: So when exactly did **Caul** come into existence, and how long was it before you actually thought, "this is viable" and worth releasing?

C: I started on the recording that would eventually become *Epiphany/Fortunate* in June '93. I worked steadily for about nine months, recording more material. I didn't know what I was going to do with it. I've been making music for about 11 years, but I never put anything out. I was never happy with what I was doing. When this material started to take shape, though, I knew something was finally working out. In January of '94, I lost my job and decided to take advantage of unemployment benefits and take a break. This gave me the time to think about I should finish the tape up. I started sending them out in May of '94, so it was about a year. I followed with two more tapes that year, *Whole*, which came out in July and *The Golden Section*, which came out in December.

AD: When you say you've been doing stuff for 11 years now, what sort of stuff was it? Had you always been doing electronically based music?

C: Sort of - I pretty much did whatever I felt like doing (or I should say, capable of doing!). I started doing stuff towards the end of high school. A friend of mine and I had a recording project we called *Pedsking*, which was some crazy stuff. Improvisation, all kinds of experimental stuff. Some of it actually still sounds pretty cool. We did some actual songs, spoken word pieces with really weird background effects. There were some injuries and some near injuries. It was good fun. On my own I did some electronic pieces, some acoustic music, again, all kinds of stuff. A lot of my music had a sense of humor. Goofy songs. At some point, I began to make things a little more serious in nature. I started making more melancholy folkie kind of stuff, which probably led up to **Caul**. I have so many four-track tapes laying around filled with music that I've never done anything with. None of it was really too "Caul-like."

AD: What's the significance and/or meaning behind the name **Caul**?

C: A caul is a thin layer of amniotic fluid which sometimes remains covering the head of a newborn child. It was considered lucky and supposedly gave one special powers such as luck, protection, the ability to see into the future and the ability to converse with the dead. They were usually preserved and worn about the neck as a talisman or sold as charms. As far as any personal significance is concerned, there is none. I chose the name mostly because I liked the sound of it and the history of it. I knew many people wouldn't know what it was, so there would be a sense of mystery about it.

CAUL c/o Brett Smith, 3745 Washington St. #12, Kansas City, MO. 64111 USA.

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CONTRASTATE

By all accounts, Britain's **Contrastate** remains one of the most unique, captivating outfits in existence...so why does it seem like they're forever overlooked and unrecognized? This is a group like no other, whose mesmerizing electro-acoustic and electronic textures, haunting atmospheres, and thought provoking lyrics never fail to amaze. Discover them. The following was done via mail with member's Stephen Meixner and Jonathan Grieve.

AD: A brief overview of how **Contrastate** came into existence?

JG: Before we, (Stephen Meixner and myself), set up **Contrastate** we did a couple of theater performances which Steve did the music for and I wrote the scripts (we both performed). Stephen suggested that we just concentrate on the music so we tried an improvised gig at our college, which though lasting only three of our allotted fifteen minutes at least proved we were talented enough to get thrown off stage. Then we started writing guitar based songs inspired by groups like **Laibach**, **Foetus**, and **Glenn Branca**. After messing around with this for awhile (it wasn't really working), we decided to go to Geneva and play some hard, painful industrial type noise (I had a friend there who said she could organize a gig for us). That was really what kicked **Contrastate** into action

AD: Was there any sort of clear idea of what you wanted to do at that point?

JG: I think that musically it was a bit of an adventure. I had previously only played in rock bands as a guitarist and singer so this kind of music was something very new to me. I think Stephen had a much clearer idea of what we wanted to do. Philosophically our ideas started to develop towards wanting to create music that was critical of itself and in a kind of state of permanent revolution, hence the name **Contrastate**, something which is able to remain in a state of flux whilst maintaining a recognizable identity. Musically our approach has been to be challenging without preaching, and to be provocative without necessarily resorting to an aural assault. Having said that our first ever full length gig was oriented towards full out noise, though even at that time we had a notion of the ambient type sound we developed afterwards. In answer to your question we didn't start out with no idea, but the process creating for **Contrastate** has developed over the years and thus defined itself as we have gone along.

AD: Has your initial outlook and goals since that time?

JG: Yes, our initial outlook and goals have changed, that is because of the usual reasons, working within limitations and realizing what just is possible, trying things out and learning from out mistakes. I think **Contrastate** is still in its infancy, so in fact many of the goals that we originally held still haven't been fulfilled. Having said that I never really imagined that we would get even this far.

The fundamental purpose behind **Contrastate** has remained the same, that of trying to remain constantly challenging to ourselves and not just to the audience. Taking on new influences, not just in the "scene". Trying different ways of making the music, not being purely acoustic, or electronic, using sampling and improvisation. We have deliberately not allied ourselves to a particular form of experimentalism as it would defeat the purpose and creed behind what I would call exploratory music making.

AD: Are remnants of your background in theater now incorporated to some degree into **Contrastate**?

JG: I am still active in theater and film with a performance group in London creating a mix of live art and theater, so in many ways the remnants of the background in theater are for me very much in the foreground. The texts for live are written in a sense as performance material and so are different I think from the studio material in that I try to create a role for them. I would like to bring the performance out of the music more, though not at the expense of losing the conception of **Contrastate** as a band, because it gives playing live that risky and more spontaneous edge. People say the music is very filmic and dramatic however we don't make a conscious effort to do it, it is something that comes naturally to us and probably lies in the approach that we take.

AD: What would say is the main motivating factor behind **Contrastate**? Any particular inspiration before the recording or writing of new material?

SM: The main motivating factor is to produce good music that we enjoy and that hopefully other people enjoy too. The inspiration behind each recording varies with each project. For example, the inspiration behind "*A live coal under the ashes*" were the changes in eastern and central Europe during 1989/1990, more specifically I was interested in the political and social changes occurring at the time. I was also interested in the

events leading to the changes and the implications of the future.

JG: Lyrically our intentions seem to have become concerned with challenging any form of status quo that exists for its own sake, for example forms of religious or political dogma that stand in the way of change and openness. Even more personal texts reflect this like "Perhaps it comes out of the black sea" and "At the bottom of my dreams" which are concerned with arrival of personal stasis, of being locked inside your mind and bad habits, and stuck in the unrelenting repetition of human action and fantasy which leads one only back to oneself and never away.

AD: Do you then consider *1000 Badgers* to be a more personal release than *Throwing*?

JG: I think perhaps I used the wrong word and should say that the texts are more subjective than later ones. *A Thousand Badgers...* is certainly a more subjective release and a less socially aware one, but I don't think it makes it a more or less personal effort as a similar amount of energy and care has gone in to them all. The first three releases *Seven Hands...*, *A Thousand Badgers...*, and "*i*" were all to a certain extent concerned with birth and coming into the world, self definition and belief. It was only with "*i*" that we began focusing our attacks, albeit loosely, and in that case on organized religion. The reason it was called "*i*" was because the music seemed to suggest the orientation of the individual within systems and the problem of finding an identity that isn't the product of social coercion. Since those releases we've found it easier to take the problems from different points of view, not just our own, creating insights into the minds of those systems that we believe cause the oppression.

AD: Tell me about *Throwing Out the Baby With the Bathwater...* particularly the significance of the titles and lyrics, which seem to speak of a nostalgia for the past as well as a sense of hopelessness and loss for the future ... what was the general frame of



mind going into this recording?

SM: I took the title "Throwing Out the Baby With the Bathwater" from an article by Jurgen Habermas on Conservatism in politics, which refers to their insistence on seeing change or alternatives as a threat to the existing order and tradition. The title and lyrics take this concept further with reference to the political situation in the Western world, in particular the absence of any serious political alternative to official in any Western society. The lyrics refer to the seemingly fatalistic acceptance of the way society is run, with no real vision of the future. Social change, and the ability of humanity as a whole to alter their own circumstances for the better and that society surrounding them are dismissed as naive. With no alternatives, or competing visions of the future, politics has become a mere technical matter of management and administration. But the lyrics also state that we do not have to accept this nostalgia for the past and the limits and cynicism placed on our future. By constantly questioning and establishing a critique against current arguments a basis and a foundation of alternatives can be made thereby giving us a choice of what kind of society we would like to live in.

AD: Do you typically begin with a concept in mind?

SM: For large scale projects such as albums, live work, etc we prefer to start with a general theme (or concept if you like). It helps to focus the mind on the songs and give them a direction. This means that rather than just have a collection of sounds and songs from here, there, and everywhere, but not knowing why you use the sounds or what effect you wanted them to have; you have instead sounds and songs working together to create emotion, feeling, and a sense of saying something.

AD: You recently completed a spot for Dutch Radio...which will ultimately become a CD in the *Mort Aux Vaches* series on Staalplaat. Describe the general set-up for these recordings...are you transmitted live over the radio? Was the material you did all new material?

SM: In October 1995 we recorded a live studio session for VPRO in Holland. This was broadcast, along with an interview and some studio material, sometime in December. Staalplaat will release the studio session as part of the *Mort Aux Vaches* series in early 1996. Since 1993 when we returned to the live scene we do not try to recreate any of the studio material live as it is almost impossible to do exactly what we did in a studio environment. So the material for live performances is all new material. The general set-up is as follows: - All instruments (guitars, flutes, percussion, etc) and vocals go through our own mixing desk. Everything is played live and treated through various effects. By going through our own mixing desk we have control over our own sound and levels which we change and alter as we perform.

AD: What's the approach to recording new material...who contributes what etc? I'm always amazed at how focused your recordings tend to be, so I assume there's a fair amount of forethought?

JG: As a general rule I write the texts and do most of the vocals. Stephen Meixner often comes up

with the original idea and also mixes and produces all the work. Stephen Pomeroy does most of the percussion work as well as providing a lot of the technical ideas for producing the sounds we use. We all contribute to the overall sound picture. In a way telling you that is irrelevant, because we never credit the band members for particular input. The reason for that is our input varies from release to release and we are more concerned with the work we are creating than our own input, for this reason **Contrastate** can be perceived as an autonomous entity. There is always, as in most music, a certain amount of playing with ideas, collecting and discarding them, as well as a certain amount of forethought concerning the theme of the track and that can be defined by a concept, a text, or a mood or sound that generates associates.

AD: Live shows must be something you enjoy doing as you've appeared at both the Deadly Actions Festival as well as at Festival Karlsruhe... your thoughts on those two shows?

JG: It is enjoyable now though it never used to be. It has taken a good few years to sort our stage set



up and a way of communicating what we are saying whilst making it interesting. Playing live is definitely something I enjoy doing., I am a performer anyway and run my performance group separate to **Contrastate**. I am always eager to get on stage, however with **Contrastate** I think it is important for us that we keep our live appearances to a minimum, this is for various reasons, one is that we write the live music specifically for a show and also work on a performance concept for it. In a recent London show we used two dancers that I choreographed into the show. The other reason is that we prefer not to play a set too often, we played this one three times, which is the most ever. Lastly, we are primarily a studio band. The gig in Karlsruhe was important to us because it was our first in four years. I very much felt we had something to prove in the sense of being able to pull it off as a live band, thankfully it worked. Working with Tesco was excellent as they are exceptionally good to work with.

AD: Do you see **Contrastate** as having built a particular niche?

JG: I think we have built ourselves a small niche which we would like to expand, and hopefully by playing with bands that do a different kind of music we can reach different audiences.

AD: You've almost exclusively had Ben Hughes do your artwork ...who exactly is he and what is it about his work that attracts you?

SM: Ben Hughes is an old friend of mine. We both met at college. I have always admired Ben's artwork and wanted him to do our covers. I like his use of colours and technique -- I find his work quite unique. While for some his artwork may seem a little abstract, there is an enormous amount of depth in each painting and drawing, and each usually has something to do with it, either a character, an object, etc. which has an underlying meaning for us. Ben is also a very accomplished musician operating in the alternative rock field in which I usually help by mixing and producing his music. While you correctly point out that Ben almost exclusively does our artwork, another friend of mine Stone, whom I met while living in Germany, also contributes. Again, I really like his artwork and find that it compliments Ben's artwork very well. Both artists work compliment our music, and by using them both exclusively we are seen to have an identifiable product. I am certainly not interested in having so called "shocking" artwork on our products just for the sake of it, a very tired old formula which some groups in the industrial/experimental field still insist on using.

AD: Upcoming projects we can look forward to?

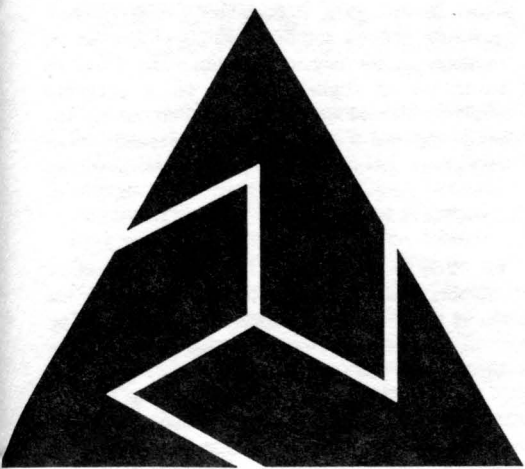
SM: There are certainly a few up-and-coming projects to look forward to. As you have already mentioned our live studio sessions will be released by Staalplaat as part of the *Mort Aux Vaches* series. In the early part of '96 Dierter Promotions will be re-releasing *English Embers*, "In Absentia", plus a new track as a CD single. Fourth Dimension will be releasing a new 7" single with an eight page booklet, and sometime in April/May I hope to release on Black Rose Recordings a CD-ep entitled *Goodbye, Great Nation*. This release may surprise a few people in that it is a collaboration between **Contrastate** and another group *The Tiger Lillies*, who describe themselves as an anarchic castrato blues trio.

AD: What can you tell me about the piece you've submitted for this issue?

SM: Basically in one of your questions you asked if our recordings were for the most part loosely mapped out, and the answer was yes. The track that we submitted for this issue is different in that it is an improvised piece. We do not do too many of them. We wanted to try a different approach to recording and this is the result.

JG: The text is about a dream that I had where I was standing on a beach in the rain and had the sensation that as the rain was falling on me my body was beginning to melt and run into the sea. I knew I was still there because I could see everything but I had the impression that I didn't possess a body anymore. Every time I tried to do anything I could only imagine myself doing it, because I repeatedly found that I was in exactly the same place as when I started.

---Address under Black Rose at end of magazine---



Allegory Chapel Ltd.

This is the first of a two-part interview conducted with Elden M of **Allegory Chapel Ltd.** In existence for well over a decade now and with more than box full of cassette and collaborative releases under his belt, 1995 finally saw the release of Elden's debut digital outing *When Angels Fall* (Charnel Music). A unique recording that blended stormy waves of thick white noise with stirring neo-classical orchestrations and a few samples used mostly for introductory purposes, it would seem a rather "unhealthy" marriage of styles, but I'll be damned if the man didn't make it work! An absurdly nice and enthusiastic person to work with, Elden has lots to say and comment on....look for more in Issue 8! The following was done via fax.

AD: Let me start by saying *When Angels Fall* remains one of the more unique "noise" albums I heard last year...the majority textured noise, but not without a fair share of classically inspired moments....to me, its almost constructed around contrasts and juxtapositions....how did you approach it and what took you so long to finally put out a CD?

ACL: Contrasts and juxtapositions are very important in **Allegory Chapel Ltd.** soundworks. Contrasting elements stand out and are highlighted when combined or arranged to form a recording. As in life, opposites create dynamic, and certain things exist because there is a corresponding opposite. No rose is without its thorns; no ecstasy without pain. ("No birth without blood," I'm sure you've heard it all before....) Too often noise that just drones on and on is very monochromatic and boring to me. With my recordings I want to avoid what is boring and without dynamic; that was my only approach to recording *When Angels Fall*. I feel that each individual track of that CD stands on its own... but each single track is not characteristic of A.C.L. as whole. All eight pieces have to be considered together in the context of the CD as a whole. As for taking so long to finally put out a CD (A.C.L. has existed since 1983), I didn't believe that I had produced a body of work that completely warranted the attention (in terms of mass international distribution or "mainstream legitimacy") that CDs (and vinyl LPs still) are afforded commercially. Prior to *When Angels Fall* I had released only a few individual tracks on CD and LP compilations, and a seven inch (*Live at Starlight* with **Hijo Kaidan** and **Trance**); everything else has been on cassettes, each tape evolving as steps up to finally releasing a CD. In

my opinion, the CD is "better" than *Demimonde Voices* (G.R.O.S.S. tape) that came before; *Demimonde Voices* is better than *Assaults on the Human Body* (Freedom in a Vacuum Cassette), which was "better" than *Satanic Verses* (Nihilistic tape) -- by "better" I mean in terms of maturity and improvement in the quality overall of composition and arrangement, focus (self-editing out superfluous and unnecessary parts), fidelity standards, etc.

AD: What are your thoughts on some of those earlier recordings now....are you still happy with them, content with them still being distributed, heard, appreciated? Going back to 1983, what were your initial influences?

ACL: Some of the early A.C.L. recordings remain very strong, and certain pieces should be heard. Sometimes when I listen to some of my early tapes, I can't believe that I was able to articulate such complex arrangements on four tracks; I think of those as being "hand-crafted" and marvel, with all modesty aside, at my ability even back then. Some of the early recordings are very raw and "half baked" to be blunt, but that was all a part of inexperience and attempting eclecticism. Some of the experiments with actual "pop" songs are better left unheard at this point. The early tapes have been deleted for various reasons, but Dan Kletter of Flying Esophagus (who released a live **Trance** CD) is interested in releasing an anthology CD consisting of the best A.C.L. stuff from the first ten years. All my recordings, even the earliest, maintain the importance of contrasts and juxtaposed dynamics; I intend for my works to execute the same way that I play chess: unpredictable! My strategy is to always keep the opponent off guard, off balanced, and guessing what will happen next -- this usually wreaks havoc on weak defensive positions!

My initial influences were the early "industrial" bands such as T.G., S.P.K., **Boyd Rice** and **NON**, **Test Dept.**, **Cab Voltaire**, etc. There was always a big scene in the San Francisco Bay Area because of people like **Monte Cazazza** and **Factrix**, **Mark Pauline** and **SRL**, **Minimal Man**, **Tuxedomoon**, etc. By 1987 I was totally immersed in the middle of a thriving scene, which revolved around groups like **The Haters**, **PGR/Thessalonians**, **BCO**, **Breather**, **Ex-I**, **23 Screams**, **Personal Dossemiter**, **IAO Core**, **Kingshouse**, **Negativland**, **Consternation of Pain** etc., groups that taught me how to present a live set that's both interesting and innovative. I remember how the earliest **Haters** shows were the most destructive and violent (audience members usually brought their own sledgehammers and crowbars!) -- once we destroyed a Porsche Targa on 455 Tenth St. and I almost got my foot chopped off!

AD: Your thoughts on the current underground scene in general...things you see that you like in particular? Still possible to find something unique in a world of derivatives?

ACL: The current scene is huge, but just how healthy it remains to be seen. I think we're at the point in history (cyclical) similar to the past where there have been a dime-a-dozen punk rock bands, or metal, or disco bands, etc., that quality suffers before the cream rises to the top. Yes, there is an influx of derivative types, there are so many "acts" consisting of neophytes and dilettantes who, for whatever reasons, believe that they can go on stage, or release tapes, and subject an unwitting audience to noise -- undisciplined, nothing to say, a racket for racket's sake! When I helped produce the first **Hijo Kaidan** with **Solmania** show in San Francisco, I heard someone in the audience scream out "Why, oh why did I ever bother learning how to play guitar!?" That person should have been shot right then and there, and relieved of his pathetic life!

Unique is hard to find because I equate it with innovation. I'm a big fan of Harry Betoia, and Hans Reichel's Daxophone recordings, and I'm always up to go see performances by Barry Schwartz, or Tim North on his hoverdrums. I'm really interested in what's happening in Europe with artists like **Atrax Morgue**, **Brighter Death Now**, **MZ. 412**, **Allerseelen**, **Soldnergeist**, **Inanna**, etc, the "death-noise" and "black-ambient" stuff coming out on Cold Meat, Slaughter, Old Europa Cafe, Ant Zen, **LOKI Foundation** etc. Some of this stuff may be considered derivative of **Whitehouse** and **Lustmord**, so they may not be considered unique, but I like these groups because they are able to maintain an extreme edge that is viewed as commercially rebellious. Europeans are interested in tapping into dark emotions with hard, dark sounds, in contrast to Americans who are vainly chasing the Japanese. Japanese noise art is born out of their restrictive group-oriented conventions, it is definitely nihilistic purgation. American society is a much more open and free society relatively speaking in comparison to Japanese society, and that's why US noise is not as purely as intense as Japanese noise.

AD: Your sound could be described as being fairly varied....are you're all that concerned with having a definitive **Allegory Chapel** sound? By the same token, do you consider *Angels* to be the comprehensive **Allegory** release?

ACL: Contrary to any malformed assumptions about my work from simple cursory scrutiny of a few recordings, I am very committed to producing a definitive A.C.L. sound! I believe that A.C.L.'s "sound" is very distinctive, unique, and



immediately recognizable as characteristic of A.C.L. I'm secure in the knowledge that when anything of mine is heard, it won't be mistaken for anyone else. This is due to methods of recording that I have developed over time, striving for a certain fidelity and articulation which is personal to my thinking patterns. It's all about how I interpret life as I encounter it, distilling concepts and beliefs into a realization for both communication and purgation (or is it "regurgitation"? Ha ha! joke!?) *When Angels Fall* should be considered as only the "tip of the iceberg!" Continue to expect high caliber output that remains beyond classification and is iconoclastic, because I concentrate on being eclectic and different, and because I hold myself to higher standards past what is average.

AD: So, with that in mind, what sort of stuff can we expect to hear from you in the near future...anything concrete that you're working on now? An area that you'd like to explore with A.C.L. and haven't yet?

ACL: As usual, future recordings will continue to utilize my personal style of noise plus music blend which, as I've just stated earlier, is evolving to be a very distinctive style. I've been working on a two-part demo tape(s) with the intention of shopping it around to labels who would be interested in releasing a future CD. It's in two parts (two sixty minute tapes) because I have a lot of ideas and the labels can pick and choose what they would want to release, sort of like a customized album. I think that my Satanic tendencies are being revealed as a prime force behind my recordings; keeping things sounding sinister and "evil" is an attempt to maintain an extreme edge, a desire to remain innovative which, naturally, is a distinct aversion to mediocrity. In 1989 I had recorded four "metal" oriented tracks with the idea of forming a new band called "Libertinage" (patterned after *Godflesh* and *TechnoAnimal*); now I'm thinking of resurrecting this concept but making it "blacker" since I've been listening to black metal (a natural progression from all the death metal and grind bands). Also because sonic technology has progressed incredibly in the past decade, I am interested in composing material which would utilize Enochoian frequencies or infrasonics (I'm sure the CIA would also be interested because of the covert military applications).

AD: You were trained in classical music were you not? How has that affected your approach and outlook?

ACL: I had really terrible experiences as a youngster learning how to play piano. My first piano teacher was very inept and taught only the barest of fundamentals; I learned a lot of material by rote, copying what he showed me and trying to get by. Learning scales was the most tedious aspect of the lessons, and compounded by the oppressive heat of a tropical climate. I developed a psychosomatic reaction: becoming extremely drowsy to the point of falling asleep! Even now, I can't help getting sleepy when I try to force myself to practice scales! What saved me was eventually finding out about music theory, which I was exposed to in a junior-high music appreciation class. I didn't begin to take theory classes full time until I got to college, and when I did, everything exploded! My theory teachers were all seasoned musicians -- major players, and they taught in a

very personal, easily understandable way that made learning a joy! We used "Harmony by Piston" as our main text, since my teacher was a student of Walter Piston's; Piston was a student of Stravinsky! But I took other classes that would prove invaluable later on: basic electricity and electronic engineering, computer science, mass media/television production, even business management. Music classes required me to write essays on concerts and shows that I would attend, along with the usual assignments, but what was really great was having to listen to tapes of various frequencies and understand their properties in the context of how they fit in harmonies generated by combining various timbres of a myriad of instruments and how they can affect a listener! Then, totally unrelated to music, I would have to look at those frequencies on an oscilloscope in electronic class! Theory class exposed me to early experimental composers such as Cage, Stockhausen, Webern, Varese, Subotnick, etc. Before that, I was a big fan of avant-jazzists such as Anthony Braxton, Muhal Richard Abrahams, Air, and the Art Ensemble of Chicago (who used car hub-caps and other metal). With the advent of punk rock and "industrial culture" I experienced an even more radical shift in my attitude about music and recording, but I never agreed with the prevailing rebellion against conventional music theory. What a lot of "artists" don't understand is that theory is basically bean counting! Theory is just numbers, but theory did not come first -- music is and always was first. Theory shows through historical example and consensus how many times a certain chord follows another chord, or why a certain interval (combination of notes) sounds the way it does, whether to the listener that interval is dissonant or not, etc. I can't buy the bullshit of certain people who maintain that they're "inventing" a "new" form of music by rejecting conventional structures -- do they even know what it is they're rejecting? Why try to invent a new car when things like vulcanized rubber, and internal combustion chambers are already there? Sure you can try to improve on the existing model; remember the rotary engine Mazda? That's like the Japanese noise scene! Punk rock adds high-octane to tired old formulas (now even punk is cliched and corporate); post industrial experimental outfits are like the new chip-technology based electrical-systems under the hood. You're still behind the wheel sitting on four tires! I don't remember everything that I learned in school of course (it was a long time ago, too), but I think that a lot of it has been retained almost like instinct. Theory is used only as a guide, a tool which helps to get the most out of what I want to do; it certainly isn't like Moses' Ten Commandments -- etched in stone! I know where I can diverge from convention and pretty much gauge whether an experiment works or fails; and sometimes theory helps overcome blocks (roadblocks!). And what is noise? Noise is

sound, which are frequencies! (No I don't remember what a lot of sound looks like on an oscilloscope, but they are beautiful when viewed as waveforms of digital samples on a computer monitor!) Recording is dependent on having the tools, and the widest vocabulary possible in an attempt to articulate concepts and ideas rolling around in the brain; I know I have the tools, I think I have the skills.

AD: You're also done a remarkable amount of collaborations...how does that normally work for you as far as initiating contact, the actual recording of the material, etc? What's been the most satisfying collaboration you've done?

ACL: Collaborations come about through various ways. Basically if I am asked to do something with someone, and the conditions are right for getting together, we will jam! I make myself easily available because I'm so lazy about writing to people and being the first to start things rolling. So all of my collaborations have been with friends who come over to set up their gear. What's really been convenient is to set up a live broadcast on the radio and get an air-check to listen to after the fact. That's how the *Chaos of the Night* CD came about. Mayuko Hino came to town, an interview was set up on KFJC with the intention of getting her together with Monte Cazazza (+ Mason and I), and getting a CD out of it for Endorphine Factory. Being on stage with *Hijo Kaidan*, *Merzbow*, and *Bustmonsters* are the most intense and physically demanding, it's pretty pointless to go on stage with them and just stand there like a geek! Our *Torture Chorus* shows have always been fun, albeit sometimes dangerous: they're like the most extreme mix of punk rock, noise, dada, glam rock, anarchy, and scatological performance mess ever!

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TESENDALO

Here's a rather short interview done with Peter Schuster of **Tesendalo**. Peter's been doing work under that moniker since about 1987, but has just begun to gain recognition with the release of an excellent 7" on Drone (a perfect match if ever there was one), an appearance on the *Oktagon* LP for Ant-Zen, an LP called *Natur Naht* on White Noise (now Noise Museum) and a new one entitled *Wendzeit* for Holland's Korm Plastic. All are fairly limited in production (averaging around 300 some copies), and feature long, mind-expanding tracks of soothing, linear ambience. Its a very pleasing style of music sure to appeal to fans of *Zoviet France*, Klaus Schulze and those in between. Peter also runs a small label called Prion Tapes and is a member of the experimental outfit *Doc Wör Mirran*. The following was done via fax.

AD: What were the circumstances leading up to the formation of **Tesendalo**...any specific aspirations, your musical background, previous musical activities etc?

T: First I was in a punk band called *Kontoauszug* (bank statement), then I joined an early Nurnberg experimental band called *PCR*, who released several tapes and one LP. My aspirations are to be my own boss and have the freedom of expression with my music. I can't imagine ever signing to a major label, and enjoy putting out my music on small indies.

AD: Seeing as how I've only heard the track on *Oktagon*, the *Natur Naht* LP and the *Entwurf* 7" on Drone, would you say that earlier works are in a similar vein stylistically (in other words, has your sound changed much since **Tesendalo** began on 1987?).

T: Earlier **Tesendalo** tapes were more noise influenced. Since then, it has grown more ambient in nature.

AD: Speaking of earlier work...what are your thoughts on some of that material now? Do you go back and listen to it often?

T: This has been a learning process, and I am always developing. I still do listen to the older material.

AD: I see from your discography that one of your tapes was called *Early Morning Music* (First Angst, 1993)...which I find to be a pretty apt description for your style of music...how do you describe the **Tesendalo** sound in general?

T: I never really thought much about giving my style a name. Maybe everyone that listens to it should decide for themselves. I guess if I called it ambient techno I could make some money of it!

AD: You also work rather closely with Klaus of *Telepherique*...how did you two hook up and would you consider him to be a full time member of **Tesendalo**? What is it that he brings to **Tesendalo** musically?

T: Klaus' project is *Telepherique*. **Tesendalo** is more my own solo project, and Klaus has appeared

as a guest on a few recordings. I don't want **Tesendalo** to be too anchored with a permanent line-up.

AD: How has the response been to *Natur Naht* so far? Any chance of it being repressed once its sold out? What about the LP on Marginal Talent (lmd.. 100 copies)?

T: White Noise released the *Natur Naht* LP, and he would be the one to ask regarding a repressing. As for Marginal Talent, we always only do one pressing, no repressings on vinyl. And with public reaction regarding the *Natur Naht*, so far it has been overwhelmingly positive.

AD: Tell me a bit about your approach in general...how often do you record material, what sort of instrumentation, the motivation to record a new piece? Anything you can tell me about the piece you've submitted for this issue?

T: I record fairly regularly. It should come from its own, and not be forced. Luckily, I feel inspired regularly to record. As for instruments, its usually electric bass, synths, and tape manipulation. The piece I recorded for you was easier, because I sort of felt I knew what your tastes were. It was recorded in my home studio.

AD: What have you got in the works at the moment?

T: Right now we're getting ready to release the **Tesendalo/Doc Wör Mirran** split single on Marginal Talent. Also, a new LP on Marginal Talent will be out in Summer with hand pasted covers. A limited to 20 or 30 CD will be out on Handmade, a sublabel of the *Doc Wör Mirran* and related projects label "Mirran Threat". Several cassettes are also in the works.

AD: Anything you've been listening to lately that's impressed you? Was there any one band that influenced **Tesendalo** specifically?

T: Right now I am listening to a lot of crossover, real distorted noise guitar: *Helmet*, *Zeni Geva*, *Skullflower*. Of all artists, Klaus Schulze has influenced me the most. Through his music I came to the realization that I wanted to record.

AD: Is **Tesendalo** something you carry over into live performances? If yes, what's the general set-up when doing shows?

T: **Tesendalo** has never played live, and it is not planned. It would be considered if there was an interesting offer.

AD: Your thoughts on the whole new crop of "ambient" artists popping up?

T: Generally I feel positive about the current ambient scene, although ambient has existed for many years already. It is just popular at the moment because of the techno scene embracing it. It does help older artists and their releases to get a bit more exposure now.

AD: Do you think about the material prior to recording it, or do you just sit down, hit the record button and see what happens?

T: I always plan ahead. I get a feeling about a piece, maybe a melody in my head, and it comes out when its ready. I always know when a piece is finished, it somehow tells me it is finished and there is nothing more to add.

AD: Other interests?

T: I love to go to shows. I used to drink with the other DWM guys, but since Bernard H. Worrick left, there is no one that can keep up with me. I do need to have some fun after work as well. Plus I have a girlfriend that I like to spend as much time as possible with (who by the way, helps with **Tesendalo** cover designs).

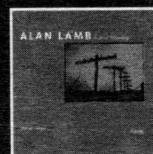
SELECT DISCOGRAPHY:

Untitled C60 - 1987, Prion Tapes
 "2" C60 - 1988, Marginal Talent Records
 Untitled C80/C46 Box set - 1991, Clockwork
Auf Ein Wort C46 - 1991, Prion Tapes
Tesendalo LP - 1992 Marginal Talent LP
Musca 10x C60 - 1992, Prion Tapes
Early Morning Music C46 - 1993, First Angst
Berichte (w/ *Telepherique*) C46 - 1994, Drahtfunk Productions
Brume/Telepherique/Tesendalo LP - 1994 M.T.
Entwurf I/II 7" - 1994, Drone Records
Fragment I-III (w/ *Telepherique*) C60 - 1994 Masking Tapes
Natur Naht LP - 1995, White Noise Records
Oktagon V/A LP - 1995, Ant-Zen
Wendzeit LP - 1996, Korm Plastics Ambient Series

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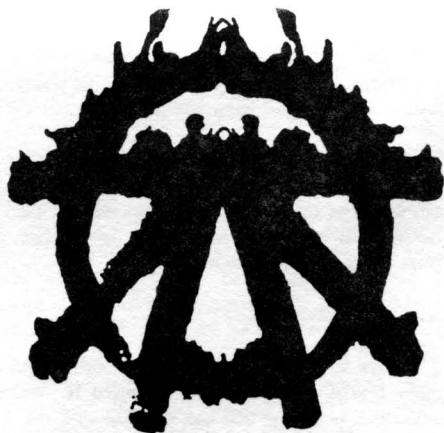
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THE OBLIVION ENSEMBLE

Released last year on Complacency Records, **Oblivion Ensemble's** debut CD *Nightmare:Sinistrotorse* showed them to be a powerful band capable of integrating elements of dark ambient, energetic and driving prog rock, abstract experimentalism, goth, even opera, into a series of carefully sculpted and ever-evolving scenarios. The fact that they managed to pull it as successfully as they did is surely a testament to the talent of its core members (musicians are typically added for live performances and studio sessions), John Bergstrom and Brannon Hungness (whose solo CD for Multimood is reviewed this issue). No matter the style or mode, the thing you'll find constant throughout their compositions is an amazing degree of complexity (both conceptually and musically), creativity, and complete discipline. Put next to what you'll find on *Nightmare:Sinistrotorse*, their submission this issue is perhaps comparatively abstract ...but even with that being the case, it still radiates a similar dark vitality you'll find lurking within all their material. Judge for yourself. The following interview was done with John Bergstrom via e-mail.

AD: What's the current status of O.E. now that you've gotten off tour ... back to just the two members (John and Brannon)?

OE: The core of **Oblivion Ensemble** has always consisted of myself and Brannon. We create, record, and produce most of the material and we work with different musicians at different times, both when recording and performing live. Our sound varies a bit depending on who we work with -- because improvisation plays a role in making up the basic building blocks that we use to sculpt our music. As for our current status, the tour this past fall involved four performers. The music was extremely aggressive and driving, building into huge sound masses by the end of the set -- pieces were structured and rhythmic. We lost ourselves in the volume, the intensity of swirling noise, tremolo guitars, percussion. Our more recent concerts and upcoming shows for this year will be a two-performer "duo" setup and are more ambient and electronic, with various slashes of noise and sampled loops from past albums and improvs. But the theme conveyed in both setups is similar; there is a focus on ritual, a merging, a light going out as another comes on. There is a discipline and purifying of spirit, through conflict, connection and metamorphosis.

AD: How did you and Brannon hook up initially? Was there the proverbial "instant chemistry"?

OE: We first met in 1988, at the International Peace Gardens. Brannon was rehearsing one of his pieces for an upcoming concert in a building -- I

had run into the building to avoid a sudden downpour outside. It was very dark, and I could barely see anything, and here I was surrounded by this strange guitar music and rain coming down on the roof. His playing inspired me, so I sat down at the piano and began improvising with him. So there was definitely an initial chemistry there....

AD: What had you both been doing prior to that meeting?

OE: What were we doing prior to that meeting? Well, we were still quite young then...not the old souls we are now. The brink of death. Brannon was living isolated in a small town practicing guitar and writing music, beyond that is a mystery to me; I was doing everything I was supposed to, only in a more sick and twisted way. I had a lot of people to hurt and a lot of darkness to find. Between 1988 and *Nightmare:Sinistrotorse* (1993) we improvised a lot together, we recorded a lot of music, we self-released three cassettes, we played a few concerts. We were partially limited previous to 1993 because we lived in different cities. While the "instant chemistry" was there, we had to refine our approach and give birth, nurture a third creative entity.

AD: Darkness plays a key role in *Nightmare*, but there are also many elements of beauty (particularly the more operatic moments), do you find the two can be closely related? Tell me a bit about how each play into *Nightmare:Sinistrotorse*?

OE: I went into *Nightmare:Sinistrotorse* searching for a deep-felt darkness. What resulted was a colorful, multi-faceted array of juxtapositions; light and dark, beauty and aggression. This was right, this was natural. Darkness is multi-dimensional. Is it really clear in the album what is beautiful and what is dark? The intensely distorted aggressive sections thrust forward, becoming uncontrollable and eventually dissolving into pure noise, pure light, pure beauty. Are the extremes of one not undeniably linked with the extremes of the other? What can be closer to the moment of sexual ecstasy than the moment of illumination, or the last breath of a dying entity? These themes are explored on *Nightmare*, and really within the basic musical fabric of **Oblivion Ensemble**. In infinitesimal detail, in an infinite number of perspectives, simultaneous and individual, victim and audience and instigator.

AD: Will your next release continue to expand on the concepts explored on *Nightmare*?

OE: The concept will become more clear as more albums are finished. There will be more depth, more perspectives, different points of view. The "story" as it were -- not necessarily presented chronologically -- is very detailed, with each detail in itself a building block and an important individual element. Each musical or sonic theme that has been introduced in *Nightmare:Sinistrotorse* reveals questions, some initially hidden, to be deciphered only by the organic, inexorable path the

story is on. Those who know *Nightmare* will immediately identify the point of the start that *<Sculpture>* is. Or at least, the overall holographic shape of the music of **Oblivion Ensemble** will have another different yet detailed perspective. I have often been told that our music changes for the listener with each listening. New details are revealed, new moods are created, themes are recognized and identified that had been previously lying underneath other points of interest. This is exactly what we have been working to do.

AD: Did you mention to me that the next work you have planned will forego some of the more "rock" elements of *Nightmare*? At what stage are you in at the moment as far as your next release is planned...will you do the normal recruitment of studio musicians?

OE: We have many, many hours of material recorded from the *Nightmare* sessions and from improvs and live shows since. For *<Sculpture>* we will be using this material as building blocks, weaving each sonic element into an intricate tapestry. Not to say there is no new material, most of it is, but we integrate themes and gestures that have appeared previously, as I said, by presenting them from different perspectives. Many of the musicians that were involved with *Nightmare* will also play a role in the creation of *<Sculpture>*, but so much sound design and production goes into the music by myself and Brannon that each individual musician's role is enveloped by the overall soundscapes. The music mostly composes and structured after the basic building blocks, improvisations, sections have been recorded. So far, the more rock elements of our sound have disintegrated into a weave of noise, electronic, and percussive ambience in *<Sculpture>* simply because the point of that the point of the start that the listener is at reveals this perspective. Some may think that our "rock" element remains in many ways, and it does, only in more dissipated fragmented forms. It is in this way quite similar to our live "duo" setup. If things continue to go as well as they have been, this stage of the project will have reached a completion point by late May.

AD: And will you continue with Complacency or will you be shopping it around?

OE: We'll probably send it out to a few labels. I doubt anyone will be willing to release something this extreme and evasive though -- in the sense that our music tends to exceed all boundaries of classification -- a sure way of commercial suicide. Who knows? Every couple of days I receive e-mail or a postcard or something from someone out there who has heard *Nightmare* or was at one of our concerts -- the messages are either very complimentary, violent, incoherent, or some twist of the three. Sometimes we get threats. I don't know. Brannon tells me that a couple labels have been calling him asking when it will be finished.

AD: Threats???? Like what?

OE: I remember one in particular where some guy sent me some e-mail demanding that we find and destroy everyone one of the copies of *Nightmare:Sinitrotorse*. He wouldn't explain very coherently beyond that, just ranting and raving about our responsibility to show the good side of things, and how could we bare to look in the mirror every day, it was all pretty insane. I was actually kind of scared that he would follow-up further, but I'm happy to say I haven't heard from him since. He could read this interview and decide to continue his tirade.

AD: I know that Brannon is pursuing some work on his own via Multimood...are you working on anything outside of *The Oblivion Ensemble*?

OE: I'm focused right now on a project for Minus Habens. I call it *Torse*, it's more structured dark industrial music. It's quite far removed from *Oblivion Ensemble* in many ways, but shares some of the feeling that I try to attain in *Oblivion Ensemble*. A full CD is scheduled to be released this fall by Minus Habens, so I've got to get cracking on it. I also have been working on an orchestra piece on and off for the past two years that is finally done as of just a couple days ago. Of course, I'll probably go back and revise it for the millionth time...

AD: With such a high degree of complexity in your material, what's the general set-up and approach when recording...is there a foundation built around improvisations? Do you have a clear idea of what you want to happen before you actually sit down and record?

OE: I would say that improvisation has played a consistent role as one of our basic building blocks. Sometimes a section of an improvisation is used as a framework, and details are added to color the themes or depth. Sometimes a short part of an improvisation is taken and repeated in patterns to create a more structured piece. Using improvisations in such a way really makes the music more organic, as the frame consists of live musicians performing in "real time", playing off of each other. But at the same time we don't lose the ability to add the specific events and details we need to fulfill the concept of the work. I can't say what happens when we actually start a new piece, because we haven't started a piece in eight or so years. We've always been working to finish the piece we first started.

AD: I assume then that you must have a substantial back-log of material you work from?

OE: Well, we are certainly always creating new material and recording new improvisations in different contexts. We don't just have a thousand tapes with hundreds of hours of material that we have yet to release and never do anything new....what I mean to say is that to me, I have been working on the same piece all my life, and it is built of a multiplicity of sources, sounds, musics, performances, rituals. Brannon too approaches *Oblivion Ensemble* with an all-encompassing idea of all his work being related. In terms of actually sitting down and recording a new piece, this really does not happen because we are on a path that in many ways guides; for me, the themes have already been chosen and a certain destiny is at hand. The music of *Oblivion Ensemble* is the detailed,

multiple perspective journey down that path.

AD: The musicianship is of amazingly high caliber in *Oblivion Ensemble*...and yet last time I spoke to Brannon he showed, I want to say a disdain but that seems too strong of a word...well, let's just say it seemed like he wanted to distance himself from formal training and the more academic side of things in generalobviously you don't answer for Brannon, but what are your thoughts on your musical training and the importance it's played in your musical evolution? What exactly is the background in musical training for you two?

OE: I think Brannon has a disdain for so-called "academic" music. I have a disdain for a lot of "academic" music. Brannon is self-taught; I come from a much more trained background. I decided to study for several years at the Eastman School of music in Rochester NY in the early '90's because I felt that this was the best way to learn some aspects of creating the music that I wanted to create. As far as I'm concerned, people should just get past the labels and listen to the music for a change. I remember being at an English pub with Glenn Branca a couple of years ago after a concert that had music by both of us and him describing this piece of mine as "the most academic" on the program. Glenn, for the most part, is a great guy, and I like some of his work, but at that moment I realized what an idiot he really was. He has been for years trying to shake off the rock world labeling him too classical or avant-garde because of his guitar symphonies -- now he's trying to shake off the "rock" label with his *Symphony 9* -- and then he turns right around and describes this piece of mine as "academic."

Anyway, I think that Brannon feels comfortable with his musical ability. I personally also feel quite confident about my abilities to write and perform, but I also try to grow and expand my knowledge that will help me accomplish my musical goals wherever possible. What is the academic aspect of my music anyway? That I prefer to sit down and figure things out, plan specific musical events rather than just randomly turn a few knobs and add reverb all the time?

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ALLEGORY CHAPEL LTD. CONT. FROM PAGE 10

AD: You wrote to me that the G.R.O.S.S. tape was the one that really "put you on the map" as it were, and in a sense, sort of paved the way for the CD....why was that?

ACL: I had decided to concentrate on recording a CD for Mason's Charnel label since I was thoroughly dissatisfied by how limited tapes are in terms of distribution and radio airplay, until I met Akifumi Nakajima in Osaka (during a *Torture Chorus* gig). Coincidentally, I had (days earlier) just purchased the first *Aube* and *Monde Bruits* cassettes from Modern Music in Tokyo! I was really impressed and intrigued with the packaging which utilized metal and multi-layered artwork, and

so talked to Akifumi about my idea for *Demimonde Voices*, which was to be recorded using mainly vocal samples. At the time, I didn't tell anyone what I was doing because I knew that it would be just a matter of time before G.R.O.S.S. would go the way of Sound of Pig, and everybody and their mother would be releasing a G.R.O.S.S. tape. I figured with all the attention Akifumi was getting, *Demimonde Voices* would also get noticed, and to a great extent it has, but the reviews and offers to release more work has been less than a trickle. I guess it's partially my fault for being inactive within the tape trading network for so long (my move to San Francisco and the Loma Prieta earthquake changed my priorities) -- essentially *Allegory Chapel* is a new band to people who have been listening to *Daniel Menche* or *Crawl Unit* all this time, but also a lot has changed (like people on the internet, the proliferation of Japanese noise CDs, more noise shows happening, etc) that has changed the demographics of who is listening to cassettes, that it was inevitable to concentrate exclusively on doing a CD. My G.R.O.S.S. tape was an exercise in putting together a work of such high-quality that would merit a release on Akifumi's label, and in that respect, it was successful. But as great as that tape is, it still isn't as good as *When Angels Fall*! You see, I had to make *When Angels Fall* the best thing I had ever done! I hope people learn from this; if it ain't that good people, please don't release it on some crappy CD when it should only be on cassette!

AD: Are thematic centers something you prefer to work around?

ACL: It really doesn't matter how the theme evolves, or whether or not there will be a theme in the first place. Only a few of my previous releases actually had a single main theme that was intentionally adhered to throughout. Usually, I'll compose individual tracks that will be thread together later if they do contribute to the cohesion of the theme, even a theme that may not have been conceived at the time of a track's recording. The tracks on my CD were composed individually before I noticed the underlying theme (more about this theme later); the introductory first track enjoys airplay as an individual "song" that may or may not be the introduction to anything, and "Recital 587" (previously unreleased) has finally found an outlet to be released eight years after it was recorded simply because I figured it would contribute to the homogeneity of the overall message of the CD. The phrase "When Angels Fall" is a metaphor for my own "fall from grace," the shedding of vision-impairing scales of ignorance from my eyes, the education into the wonders and mysteries of "Demimonde Culture," the rejection of stupidity and sheltered naiveté, the loss of humanity resulting in desensitization to the plight of human suffering, being devoid of compassion, but still being able to take in and marvel at all life has to offer that is not tainted by the contagion of man....power through strength and guile -- power to create and destroy; to achieve and maintain higher standards above and beyond the mass of dross, and ultimately survival at any cost! (...and the fanfare peaks before the reverberent frequencies and accompanying harmonic overtones disintegrate....).

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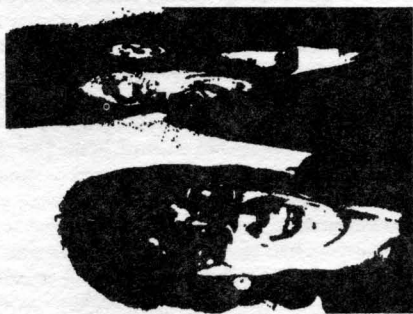
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T H E U B G U I D E

Videophile

Videophile is a continuing video magazine, usually based around one band or performer. Most contain interviews, a live show, and local odd footage. We have recieved two issues so far, PTV and LPD (I'd like to see more). So of course we will review the Legendary Pink Dots edition. This was recored at their live show 4/20/89 and features the stripped down trio of K-as-pel, Silverman, and Nells the multi-horned. Well rehearsed and powerfull performance (as always). This was a single camera production with pretty good sound quality throughout. Far too many in camera fx though. The live bit lasts about 75 minutes leaving time for some casual interviewing & footage of a church on fire. Videophile has all been produced for release with the knowledge of the bands but I doubt the labels have been made aware of their existence. All the better I say,

Videophile c/o; Tom Finn
Bx.101027 Ft. Worth, Tx. 76185



'Sing while you may...'

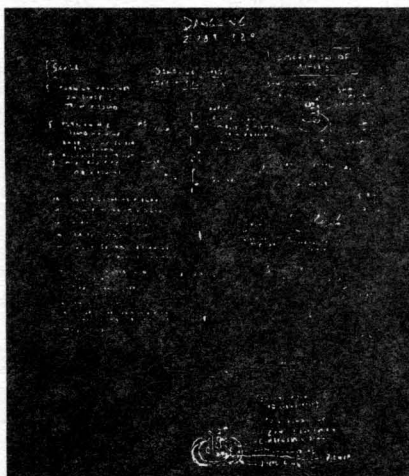


ASP films

Michael & Suzanne Dycus

An even dozen pieces by the duo that make up *Crawling With Tarts* along with some of their friends. Lots of notes which help flush out this mix of film and video. Seven of the films were recorded using the Fisher-Price PXL camera which records video on audio cassette tape. Which is put to very spooky effect on their version of 'House of Asterion'. Three of the films are different recordings of CWT live at Mills college, where Mic worked/studied for several years. Subtle and surreal, guitars hanging 25 feet up, a marching band playing to tapes of trains. Suzanne has always had a knack of playing with myths and nature & Mic is her ideal counterpoint with his technical expertise. A very charming, disarming, sophisticated and artistic release that reflects the duo perfectly.

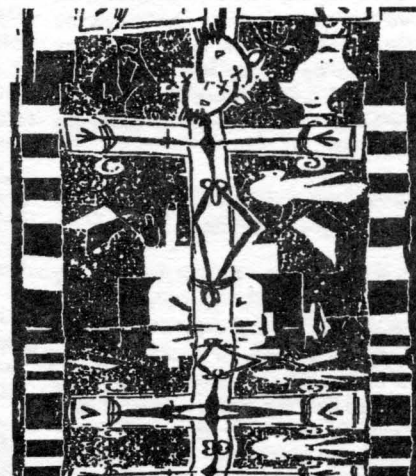
ASP/ *Crawling With Tarts*;
360 Arlington S.F. Ca. 94131



Art-Core

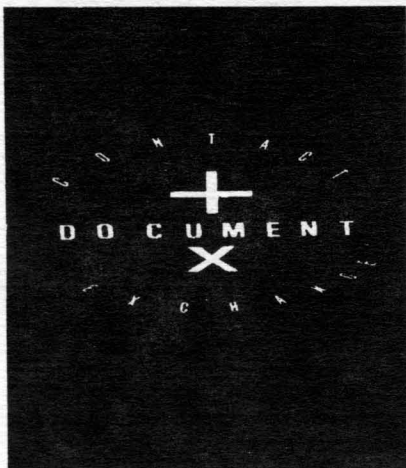
This short, (15 minute) blast of sick images comes from a public access program in Austin Texas, which is then released as a video magazine. The edition we recieved was #18 and if representative of the show, it proves that it is possible to see most anything on TV. Adult only material opening with a hostess who never describes anything or appears again, followed with a mock penis amputee/ritual burning which seems to happen for no reason. Also wedged in are a dark recording of a shitty punk band (Pocket Fishmen) and more mock surgery. The one high light being a piece by Stephan Patenite which was a well edited parody of the old 'jackalope' postcards. If Art core is out to offend, they certainly need better submissions...send in your best/worst.

ART-CORE;
bx. 49324 Austin, Tx. 78765



This is the third of hopefully many articles on video and film. UBcoming are spotlights of: John Duncan, Chris & Cozey, and Sleep Chamber, and of course more submitted tapes. If you work in these mediums, feel free to send it to;
dAS @ UBUFI 1333 grove s.f. ca. 94117

ND #11



ND the print magazine has for many years been one of the best sources both for unusual musics & mail art. In the last few years they have also become a label of note releasing artists such as; PBK, Vidna Obmana and John Watermann. This is their first video release, and hopefully not the last. The two hour tape contains 30 different artists ranging from established film-makers like Stan Brakhage (another fire loop) to mini documentaries on diverse subjects from countries throughout the world, throw in a few 'flicker' videos by the likes of Illusion of Safety & Ron Rice, and being a ND compilation, we find pieces that could be termed video mail-art. The most mundane tend to be the most produced. The most interesting are the quick look inside the video artist's mind & work. Then of course there are the jokers like the Haters, and some very serious works, and a couple of out & out turkeys..but that is objective & more fun to leave up to you. Two real nice, aspects of this compilation; it comes with a booklet inside, containing brief diatribes about the artists, and at the start of each piece there is a title card, so one won't get lost in all the myriad pieces. This is a really good collection of work, write Daniel and demand more...it always takes him a long long time but certainly worth it.

ND magazine;
bx.4144 Austin, Tx. 78765

SONIC OUTLAWS



Copy right infringement is the main thrust of this 85 min. film which has been transferred to video. The folk art of sampling in all it's forms. Within we receive a fair overview of the history of fair use including, billboard appropriation, John Oswald, micro-radio broadcasting, The Tape Beatles, Mad Magazine, Duchamp, John Heartfield and many others. The editing is real energetic but filled out with a lot of gratuitous images from films/tv.

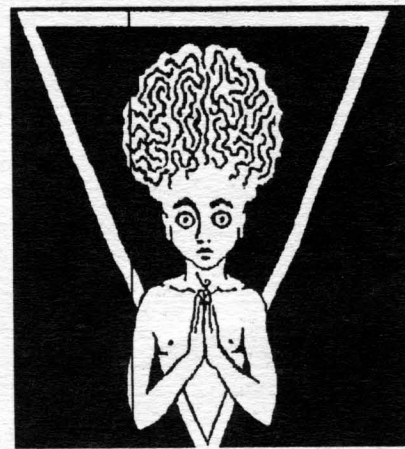
What we see primarily is Negativland and all their copy-right woes. Lots of interviewing, some clips of live performances, and even a bit of the boys in their best element, radio, doing Over The Edge on KPFA.

It also exposes that Negativland, while fighting a good cause (corporate control of communication) has been completely taken over by the media they so want to mock. All of their work recently has been so centered around their very preconceived manipulation of the culture that they have lost sight of anything else. Except themselves.

The greatest surprise for me was the portion with Douglas Kahn who wrote the excellent biography 'John Heartfield; art and mass media' and finding out he was the person also behind the 'Reagan speaks for himself' single. All in all a funny & educational blast of counter-culture heroes.

Craig Baldwin;
992 Valencia S.F. Ca. 94110

Macrocephalous compost



Another compilation containing the work of seventeen artist from all over. Fun release, it demonstrates how musicians who are creative with the use of audio tools, can also project their ideas well with creative use of video tools, often very primitive tools. Opening with a shrill live performance piece (C.C.C.C.), a bit of goth s&m (Archon Satani), really quite harsh and not quite clear what is going on or why, Japanese performance art (True Romance). Hey..! I just realized that Audio Drudge's own Jason "M" did the visuals for the Illusion of Safety video...not too bad, dreamy, and creamy...(art is subjective enough, that I can also get away with that). Other video bits include; a rather boring live Konstruktivists piece which is unfortunate as they can be brilliant when not doing the Cabaret Voltaire disco thing, and MK Ultra doing their live thing, (looking like the Haters since they all have hoods on).

Enclosed in a cloth bag with contents/contact sheet. This video also has a title card before each piece, indispensable as much of this would flow together otherwise. One last beef; this compilation runs 110 minutes on a two hour tape....always hate to see any blank space, so I filled my copy with footage from the NASA channel.

Old Europa Cafe; 38v.Le Marconi
33170 Pordenone Italy
or; Complacency,
Bx.1452 Palatine, Il. 60078

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BRIGHTER DEATH NOW

Necrose Evangelicum CD

"This is surgery with a rusted scalpel, dipped in acid and sharpened on wet granite. The anaesthetist is lying dead in the corner, so grit your teeth, this is going to hurt...unsettling frequencies, growling oscillations, demonic chanting and bleak soundscapes. Karmanik's vision is dark, dark, dark. No concessions are made for weak listeners whatsoever" - Eskhatos. Guest appearance by Mortiis.

BRIGHTER DEATH NOW



RAISON D'ETRE

Within the depths of silence and phormations CD

A deep dissection into your darker self. A journey through the body and soul awakening hidden and long forgotten chants and dreams. New amazing works by this formation, utterly dark and mesmerizing industrial/atmospheric chants to fill your heart with a cold winter depression.



MZ.412

Burning the temple of god CD

After the great success with their last CD "In nomine dei nostri satani luciferi excelsi" comes here another even greater follower. As dark and Satanic as anything can be. The ultimate disgrace of the christian god. True Swedish Black Industrial!

M
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Burning the temple of god

PENITENT

Melancholia CD/LP

Mad poetry proclamation and majestic classical music from the northern woods hailing the demons of death. A great debut CD from Beastus Rex and Azgoth, the brains behind this new formation from Norway. CD comes with a 20-pages booklet.



All CDs 140:-SEK/\$20/30DM each including post. 1 IRC for newsletter/catalog
Cold Meat Industry · po box 1881 · 581 17 Linköping · Sweden. Fax +46 13 10 39 06

REPORT FROM THE SECOND ANNUAL 'MUSIQUES ULTIMES' FESTIVAL IN NEVER'S FRANCE.

by James Stephens.

The 2nd annual 'Musiques Ultimes' festival was held on the weekend of June 1-2, 1996, at the Municipal Theater in Never's, France. The event was organized by Noise Museum, a small record label from nearby Dijon. Since the theater is fairly small, only 285 passes were made available to the event, it was sold out several weeks beforehand.

The theater itself is round and multi-tiered, with 3 balconies - two of which were available for seating. A small concession area was set up in the front of the second floor, with many dealer stalls where the bands and labels involved hawked their wares. There was also a bar where beer and sandwiches were available for the multi-national hordes of music lovers. Most of the crowd seemed to be from France and Germany, and French and German were the languages most frequently spoken at the event. There were strands and strains of individuals of other nationalities scattered throughout however; a few English had made it down, and two groups of Americans, one from the West coast and one from East coast (our group) had seen fit to fly across the Atlantic to show up for the concerts. There were reports of a Czechoslovakian in attendance, and I'm sure there must have been folks from Belgium and Holland there as well, although I don't recall speaking to any.

At 3:00PM on Saturday, the festival got underway with the appearance of the first band, **The Revolutionary Army of the Infant Jesus**, who started their set by burning frankincense and handing out printed set lists. Their stage set-up initially consisted of five televisions which were all showing static fuzz, when the curtains opened to reveal a shadowy stage set-up, with several scrim-like pieces of mesh dangling, onto which videos were projected. Musically, the Army had a melancholic folk sound, not unlike that of **Current 93**, but with a more distinctly 4-AD-ish sense of melody tossed in, making them a little like **Dead Can Dance**, only without the pompous neo-classical pretensions. Their instrumentation consisted of an accordion, acoustic guitar, flute, drums, and male and female vocal, all of which had been mixed to rather echoey effect. The group slowly worked it's way through about eight pieces, and while the mood created was powerful, I thought the last twenty or so minutes of their performance was a little drawn out. The show ended with members yanking down the pieces of mesh as the drummer played out a long tribal drum solo, which he finished by knocking over his drum kit and walking off stage.

After a 45 minute interlude, the German duo **Soldnergeist** took to the stage. They had three white cardboard crosses in front of the stage, on which the words 'Global Media Control' had been pasted with Xeroxes. There were also a few video projections in the background. Their sound was fairly deliberate, kind of a power electronics version of the current German 'death-industrial' sound (think **Genocide Organ** or **Anenzephalia**), with sampled voices floating in and out of a web of electronic sound. As a rhythmic crunch looped in the background, the two members took turns tearing pages out of magazines and pasting them to the crosses in the front. A George Bush sample began playing and then the vocals began: "America, a country out of control!". The vocalist continued with a few variations of this phrase, and

at this point, the tide of people leaving got a bit heavier. I'm not sure I blame them. **Soldnergeist** seem to be an outfit with a few good ideas, but they left them home on this particular day. Whatever "message" they were trying to project with this show was lost on me, and quite a few others apparently, as I don't recall hearing a single person say a positive thing about their show. The band themselves didn't aid their situation any by putting down the other bands, which they were seen doing, or by leaving their attitude-o-meter cranked up to full force throughout the duration of the festival. They're young guys though...maybe they'll wise up with age.

The next artist to perform was **Daniel Menche**. Expectations were high for Mr. Menche, and my comrades back home had said that Daniel was going to steal the show. He started his set by pacing around the stage while staring at the floor. He then leapt to the front of the stage and violently grabbed handfuls of sand which concealed two contact microphones. The sound it made was quite loud and devastating and since Menche continued to rustle the mics for several minutes afterwards, the charged atmosphere didn't let up, all the while making exaggerated pained facial grimaces, which would not have been out of place at a metal show. He continued by rubbing them onto his arms, and at some point, spitting on them, although by now the sound had become more of a low rumble than a fierce attack. The show was disrupted for several minutes when Daniel's converting transformer got blown out, and he grumbled and cursed until finally finding a way to override the mechanism and allow the sound to begin again. He continued with more dense organic-electronic sound from the mics, and after about fifteen more minutes, abruptly ended his show to thunderous applause. I liked Menche's performance, although I think he should have broadened his source palette to include some sounds which weren't gotten from contact microphones.

At a little after 8:30pm, **Raison D'Etre** was on. Since this outfit consists of one person, Peter Andersson, there was not a lot of stage activity throughout his performance; mostly just him sitting behind a few mixing decks on a table, while video images played in the background. This fact made it a little questionable as to whether or not any of the material *hadn't* been pre-recorded, but it didn't bother me much at the time. **Raison** started with a low and spacey ambient soundscape, punctuated by sonic blips and choral vocals, which had an overall consuming effect on the listener. The sonics crept along with cavernous depth, and slowly shifted through several phases, each of which seemed to compliment the former. The videos in the background had a nice, vaguely psychedelic aura to them and towards the middle of the set, got flashy in such a way as to be relaxing rather than distracting. Occasionally, a few mild electro-beats punctuated the creepy and glacial music, but the effect was so non-intrusive that it was fairly easy to overlook them. Despite the lack of much stage activity, I liked **Raison D'Etre**'s music more than that of any of the others, which was an especially pleasant surprise, since it was one of the only acts whose music I wasn't previously familiar with.

When the curtains opened for the next act, **Telepherique**, there was quite a bit of action going on. While video images flickered at the rear of the stage, three guys were standing in line behind a table, each of them studiously operating various pieces of mixing equipment and other electronic

gadgets. Initially, their sound consisted of windy drones with some slightly resonant metallic echoes, which were occasionally punctuated with lilting rhythms. As the show progressed, many different sounds samples were used, and at various stages, I heard trains, car horns, babies crying and birds chirping. Many of the video images in the background seemed concerned with industrial production, although there was an uneasy sense of decay that permeated many of the stills. There was also a re-appearing image of a mummy-like man, which reminded me quite a bit of Claude Rains in *The Invisible Man*. At erratic intervals, the velocity of the music was increased, sometimes in accordance with the background projections, which occasionally sped up to almost subliminal rate of motion. After about an hour, the three of them began to slowly wind down the sound, until it became a drifting ambient lull, with some quiet rhythms and chirping birds. Upon leaving the stage, the audience reaction was positive enough that **Telepherique** returned to play an encore, which was a first for the evening. Their encore consisted of about ten minutes of music, which was slightly less structured than the previous material had been, but featured some impromptu drum programming and delay, and another wash of sonics for the eager audience. Overall, I thought **Telepherique** were pretty good, but their sound is still a little too indistinct for me, and lacks the sort of character that makes the best of this type of material stand out. Mine was certainly the minority opinion however, as many people seemed to think that this act was the best one yet.

It was 11:30pm when **Schloss Tegal**, the evening's final act, appeared. Like many of the other acts, ST had a video program being projected in the background, which for my tastes, was the most interesting one of the festival. Tegal performed as a duo on this particular evening, and a lot of the material they played was recognizable as being from their *Oranur III* LP. The dense and nebulous music was quite all-enveloping, and **Schloss Tegal** built up the same sort of post-nuclear accident wasteland themes that made albums such as *Zoviet France's Mohnomishe* into such essential works. The mysterious dark aura was then overlaid with echoey blurred voices, which were frequently thematic with the projections flashing behind them. Many of the images seemed to be medical films of autopsies or copulation, but they had been digitally solarized to the point that they became recognizable only by shape or motion. Towards the second half of the set, Richard Schneider appeared at the front of the stage and began playing a thigh bone trumpet, which gave off a fairly shrill squawk and served as a counterpoint to the murky rumble in the background. Eventually, the sounds became more aquatic and gave off some ripply water-type tones, which were then pierced by high pitched stinging before grumbling to a halt. It was pretty late, and many people had fallen asleep during **Schloss Tegal**'s set, but I really enjoyed their performance, and it made the perfect caper to what was a musically rich evening.

Sunday was different to Saturday in many ways. Where it had been bright and sunny on Saturday, today was somewhat overcast and drizzly. Everybody seemed a bit more at ease, and the dealer's tables weren't as crowded. David Tibet, who had been mingling with the crowds the previous day, was nowhere to be found. People were spending more time talking with one another, networking and telling their reactions to the

previous day's shows. I saw more people clutching copies of the festival's now-or-never souvenir LP, *Deutsch Nepal's The Very Top of Lina Baby Doll*, which was sold at Noise Museum's table. Unlike the first day, I chose to sit in a different spot for each of the shows.

It was fairly early in the afternoon when the curtains opened up for **O Yuki Conjugate + The Sons of Silence = Spoke** (as billed), and it seemed as if a fairly interesting show was underway. The lighting was such that long shadows were cast by the stage set-up, which featured three overturned bicycles that were being "played" by three individuals in suits who were dragging amplified bars against the spokes of the moving bicycle wheels. The ping-pong-ping sound that this made was then, in turn, collected and manipulated by the now familiar specter of the man behind-a-stack-of-mixing-equipment who, in this particular case, was off to the far right of the stage. The quiet sounds continued unabated for about ten minutes, and then a few loud passages arose. Whereas many of the other acts had used sophisticated visual imagery to project behind them, **Spoke** had a series of pulsating and hypnotizing color circles. I kept slipping into two-minute lulls caused by these circles, and then awaking to find that another row of them had somehow mysteriously appeared undetected. As the quiet music continued on, the members of **Spoke** began picking up instruments. One guy was playing a snake-charmer-type instrument and sax, and another stood behind a keyboard. At some point, as the music was wavering along, the man behind the keyboard triggered a dance beat to begin, and this is where the show began to get a little confounding. The two men, who had previously been busy with the bicycles, began to dance around robotically in the light, while the beat became slowly more discoey. The beats didn't really bother me, but I began to wonder just what the hell was going on. I knew OYC had done some remix EP's in the past, but I wasn't really prepared for this. As if this spectacle wasn't weird enough already, one of the members picked up a mike, sauntered to the front of the stage, and began crooning like a lounge singer! Shortly after his musical jaunt, the group slowly returned to playing the bicycle spokes and the sound quietly faded out. The show ended to thunderous applause, which made me feel as though I must not have "gotten" the point, but it turned out that I wasn't the only one. While it was obvious that many people loved **Spoke's** performance, quite a few wondered what the beats and lounge singer portion were supposed to signify. I'm still clueless.

After the intermission, **Batchas** were ready to begin. Of all the acts playing at this year's festival, **Batchas** was the only one to have the distinction of having played at last year's festival as well with their performance later issued as an LP from Noise Museum. **Batchas'** show began with the stage empty of performers, and two white buckets suspended from mike stands provided the only sound; a quiet, ticking percussion. The performers began to come onto the stage slowly, and the music metamorphosed into a sort of electro-ritual hybrid. In addition to the electronics, there was also a man beating on gongs in the rear of the stage, and off to the right there was a woman who was standing and slowly bowing a long stringed instrument. In addition to the occasional sample (thunder storms, etc), members changed the scope of their playing throughout, and at differing points, one member

was blowing into a long black tube, which looked like a plastic PVC pipe and gave off a didgeridoo-like buzz, and the standing woman picked up a violin, and bowed out a few (mostly inaudible) notes. About 2/3rds of the way through the performance, the percussionist took over, and began beating on the gongs quite furiously, which gave off an imposing echo. As the metallic resonance faded in volume, the electronics came to the fore with a snippety delay sequence. There was some technical problems that caused the sounds to be crackly, but it seemed to fit right in with the rest of the sound that was being created. Based on the live LP, this years performance sounded different than last years with more of a minimal/ ambient/ ritual fusion than previous. Overall, a successful performance, and the audience seemed quite pleased as well.

There was a brief delay before **CO Caspar** was ready to begin, and for the first five minutes the curtains were closed with a projection of a mountain on them, while a minimal loop of a woman speaking played. As it should turn out, this loop continued throughout the performance. When the curtains finally opened, there was quite a spectacle to behold: the stage floor was bare except for some mixing equipment to the far left, and many strange and unidentifiable objects were hanging from the ceiling. Caspar was standing at the back of the stage with a mask on and a dagger held to his chin. He had a formidable amount of electronic gadgetry strapped around his waist, and he began slowly taking steps toward the front of the stage, all the while using the dagger to cut off the rubber mask which was covering his face. The objects which were dangling from the ceiling looked like the product of some mad junk-sculptor. One of them was composed of long hoses and gaskets, clamped together to look like a giant squid. Another was created from a long plastic pipe which had an orange glove around the end which was reaching into an object that looked like a kettle. When Caspar finally managed to cut the mask off, he lifted it with the knife, revealing his shiny bald crown, and tossed it aside. After plugging in one of his waist gadgets, he inserted a pick-up into his mouth and began chewing it, which created a mighty storm of squalling feedback. Caspar started making some bizarre "evil" faces, which made him look a little like Freddy Krueger. He flipped a toggle, and a light came on inside the plastic tube, producing a low rumbling motor sound which became louder once a hole had been gouged in the glove that was attached to this tube. Caspar, in his boots and blue work shirt, then ambled off over to where the squid like object was hanging and pushed another switch on his waist, which caused this object to vibrate and rotate, all the while making a buzzing sound. The effect was astounding and I let out an amazed laugh. While this was going on, Caspar walked over to a small metal cylinder, similar to a fire extinguisher, which was near the mixing equipment, and began moving it, such that it produced a high, echoey resonance. There were metal strings stretched around the side of the cylinder which he began plucking and bowing, causing it to give off a shimmering metallic echo. When Caspar finished with this object, he made some vocal utterances, before letting the sound fade back down to just the loop of the woman's voice. He then walked over behind a cracked glass screen which made his face appear larger than life. This ended the show, and the audience went wild, applauding him with a (mostly)

standing ovation. Indeed, **CO Caspar's** show was undoubtedly the most interesting to watch, and the strange nature of the objects he used to create his sounds made for a most unpredictable hour. At times, the performance aspect upstaged the sounds, but you won't hear any complaints from these quarters!

There was a longer wait than usual for **Current 93**, who were to be the final act of the festival. People remained in their seats and conversed quietly amongst one another during the extended intermission. Early on, a strange loop, which sounded as though it had been created from an old 78, began playing ceaselessly, and it continued through the break. At about 7:45 PM, the lights dimmed and **Current 93** came on. As expected, their stage set-up was very sparse (no projections, just nice purplish lighting), and after seeing so many groups rely on their electronics, it was a real diversion to see an act where the music didn't feature any pre-recorded source material. Their line-up consisted of Michael Chasmore on acoustic guitar, Karl Blake on bass, Joolie Wood on violin (and other instruments), and of course, David Tibet on vocals. Since all the music played was of recent vintage, they mostly sounded like a contemporary folk ensemble, albeit a fairly dark one. Tibet put quite a bit of energy into his vocals, as he was frequently shaking as he sang. Between songs, he was talking swigs from a bottle of wine, and conversing with the crowd. There was a slight technical problem near the beginning of the show - Michael's guitar just dropped right out during one song - but luckily, the group was able to continue without him, and by the next song, he was up and running again. Joolie proved herself a versatile instrumentalist, often putting down the violin to play another instrument, among them clarinet, bells, and flute. For the final song, Tibet announced that **Current 93** had a new member who was going to join them, and Joolie's young son, Sam, came on stage and shook some bells vigorously. The **Current** left the stage to a dense roar of applause, and waited for about ten minutes before returning to do an encore. The encore consisted of a couple of acoustic numbers, and then Michael plugged in to finish the set with "Lucifer Over London", bringing it to just over an hour. It was kind of strange that **Current 93** headlined for this festival, since musically, their recent sound has little in common with that of the other outfits selected to play. Still, they managed to pull off a magnificent performance, and brought a very satisfying conclusion to the program.

All things taken into consideration, I'd have to say this year's "Musiques Ultimes" festival was a roaring success. There were no major technical screw-ups, the presentation of the bands was very timely, and the program intelligently compiled. The festival's director Yann Refeuille was a very friendly and enthusiastic fellow, and I enjoyed my talks with him. In addition, this was an excellent forum for individuals to network, for artists to meet their fans, and for those who really like and appreciate this sort of music to spend a couple of days watching performances in a comfortable environment. I also think that the cost for a pass, 300FF (\$60), was quite reasonable for such a large series. This was an excellent way to experience the current experimental music scene (or some portion of it thereof) and if next year's festival is at all like this year's was, I'd have to highly recommend it. Magnifique! ~ Thanks to Laura Bass for her editorial comments and suggestions ~

REVIEWS

2/3 - Various Artists CD.

From the same label that brought us *1654 - The Cave* compilation, comes *2/3*, another pretty amazing compilation featuring new material from **Deutsch Nepal**, **Winterkalte**, **Mental Destruction**, **Dive**, and **Esplendor Geometrico** (all of whom appeared together at a festival in the Summer of '95). Rhythm and noise are the main key words for this comp, and it doesn't get much heavier, intense, or more bludgeoning than the 2 tracks from **Mental Destruction** (!) or the three from **Winterkalte** (Holy shit!!). **Deutsch Nepal** also comes on incredibly strong with two tracks, the first of which features the intense, processed vocals of Lina, agonizingly shrieking over a repetitious loop of cold electronics, and the second a hypnotically looped percussion sequence being invaded by a penetrating aggregate of electronic particles. Surprisingly, the masters of hard hitting distorted rhythms, **Dive** and **Esplendor Geometrico**, both opt to go the quieter route...using keyboards as the main foundation for their sound rather than the heavy pelts of percussion they're typically known for. **Dive's** tracks are seductive and dark and nearly reminiscent of **Sleep Chamber** (era *Sleep or Forever Hold Your Peace*), while **Esplendor Geometrico's** are bright in comparison, fusing floating, lighter style atmospheres and ambience with quirky keyboard plunks and plinks and soft-ish rhythms. It's a rather poor showing for them (actually, it's a very shitty showing to be quite honest), and about the only thing that holds *2/3* back from being nearly perfect by my standards. *Superb* packaging by the way. Hands - PO Box 1701, 90707 Furth, Germany. JM.

THE ACCELERATING WORLD - Various Artists CD.

Praise must go to Erik over at the emerging Pinch A Loaf for the packaging of this CD: a sturdy black box with a color cover and lots of cool inserts for each band, listing their discography's and pertinent info. The CD itself is snugly housed in a see-through sleeve and sealed shut with just a dab of wax. The fact that he's advertising all this for only \$9.00ppd (for North America only I imagine) makes it even more respectable. Can't believe there's much if a profit margin going on here! Anyway, musically, *The Accelerating World* is an ambitious sampler comprised almost entirely of California and Seattle experimental/noise notables (**Crawl Unit**, **Nihil**, **Speculum Fight**, **Blowhole**, **Bastard Noise**, **Lab Rat**, **Solid Eye** and more), with the only exception to that being Houston's **Richard Ramirez**. Based on past excursions from some of these bands, I was really expecting something much more abrasive, but to my surprise, a lot of what's here is relatively low-key...more a focus on minimalistic sound explorations than an all out barrage of sonic terrorism. True to form, **Ramirez** is again the exception to this with an absolute ball busting opener of serrated, flatulent, noise. Be careful to not do what I did, which is have this cranked up to ear-splitting volume. Not only will you do possible

irreversible damage to your speakers, but to some internal organs as well! As noted, subsequent tracks work on much more subtle levels. Highlights include **Solid Eye's** disquieting, surrealistic experiments with God knows what -- guitar, some bowed instrument, who's to say? Its ambiguity is its very charm, so I'll leave it at that. Also standing out was a proceeding track of slow, escalating rough edged ambience from **Crawl Unit**. The liner notes claim it to be only an excerpt but I would love to see where it was headed after ending here at around the eight minute mark. More highlights? OK, let's see.... there's **Speculum Fight** so thick -it's impenetrable (and almost melodic for that matter) droney wall of guitar (?) noise, **Nihil's** feedbacky, characteristically crunchy but un-characteristically hollow "World of Ruin," and **Cribs** delicate and serene guitar-based ambient closer. Which, of course, leaves us with the rest -- the obligatory tracks that failed to merit much attention: **Blowhole**, **Fin**, **Spastic Colon**, and a hidden, annoying track that comes after a series of silent index points. A promising debut all the same that's particularly noteworthy for its willingness to shed some light on bands that otherwise may have remained hidden from view. Pinch A Loaf. JM.

A DREAM WITHIN A DREAM: Music Inspired by E.A. Poe - Various Artists CD.

From unrequited love of the beautiful dead to the opium-induced visions of monsters seething in the shadows, to the ravings of violent lunatics, E.A. Poe introduced a world of darkness in his stories and poems that few of his contemporaries were willing to explore. The artists on this CD compiled by Mykel Boyd for his "Dead Eyes" magazine have willingly taken up Poe's haunted gauntlet, and have done fittingly obeisance at his cobweb shrine with their musical interpretations of his visions. Although *Dream* starts with a misplaced punk song, most of the music falls into the gothic and experimental/electronic genres.

In **Neither/Neither World's** contribution, a ghostly female voice slowly recites Poe's poem "Alone" against a Hellish backdrop of menacing synth and scraping violin sounds. **Simon Dreams in Violet** hark back to the early dancehall days of the **Sisters of Mercy** with their excellent, smoke-drenched, drum machine and guitar-driven version of Poe's poem "Lake -- To", while **EWrich Allen Zann** and **Brume** use skillfully collaged electronic sounds transmitted from beyond the grave, as well as ritualistic percussion bits, in their contributions. There are also a couple songs for electro/industrial fans here, including a **Calva y Nada**-ish piece from **La Function de Repulsa**, synth-heavy songs from **Angelhood** and **Angry Red Planet** focusing on the murderous side of Poe's work, and a darkly danceable piece from **Thine Eyes** built almost entirely of well-chosen samples and early **Front Line Assembly**-influenced synth. **Veil of Thorns** sews up the dead eyes of *Dream* with its dirge-like closer "Silence (A Fable)". Aside from the couple songs that just don't have much

in the way of originality from **Garden of Dreams**, **Wasteland**, and **Soul Parish**, *Dream* has a lot to offer those who find darkness beautiful and horrors from beyond the grave enticing; 65 minutes of dark music spread over 16 songs from 13 bands. Poe fans will be especially pleased to hear that most (if not all) of the lyrics were drawn from Poe's work. Bright Green Records c/o Mykel Boyd, PO Box 24, Bradley, IL 60915. DA.

AGHAST - Hexeri im Zwielficht der Finsternis CD.

Music from the deep soulless pits of the grave. Aided by a rather extreme dose of echo effects, the main ingredients in *Hexerei* are the ghostly howls, evil cackles, demonic chants and floating macabre whispers produced by the two witches (literally) that comprise **Aghast**. The accompanying music underneath remains sparse, but is frightening and effective all the same...eerie chimes and haunting atmospheres, again with the cavernous echo, play out like a wistful fog drifting through the forest. The recording quality is certainly lacking, but the moods are not....which is why if you come by my house on Halloween this is what you'll hear in an attempt to keep those pesky trick or treaters at bay. I'll bet ya it works too! Cold Meat Industry....who else? JM.

AMERICANNOISE - Various Artists CS.

"It's a Free Country...Motherfuckers!" A sound reminder, and a truly successful compilation featuring, just as MSNP proudly proclaim, the very best in North American harsh noise. Packaged in a nice little video box, *Americannoise* is complemented perfectly by a booklet straight from the Yank soul -- in the style one has come to expect from these folks: inspired artwork, public service announcements, more friendly advice, and for those big on political gossip, a flattering snap of the *new* Mrs. Beaulieu. I can't say I was overjoyed with the prospect of finding the "harshes" noise on a C-120, a length which traditionally indicates fairly lousy sound quality, but after a good listen most of my fears were allayed -- or, at any rate, entirely new, much better ones were realized.

Now for the important bit: the noise. Rather a lot really, even more than I figured on. 22 individual speaker shredders go a long way toward restoring America's supposedly tarnished harsh-ass image. MSNP's visionary singleness of purpose has always been admirable, and it's good to see someone consistently doing something only a pure noisehead would love. In a word, crunchfest. The esteemed Mr. Roemer has this noiseheaded habit of overloading his tapes by recording at a level most druggies would weep to attain. It makes for some fine headcrushing insanity, though I wouldn't expect the musically inclined to be all too pleased with the results. Lest they fail to envisage quite what it is they're missing, I've provided a few comments below.

With an eye to propriety which strikes at the heart of the American Dream, **Emil Beaulieu** launch with the abovementioned crunchfest: fat chunks of sputtering and crinkling with the

occasional dirgey wad of oozing feedback. **Knurl** then proceed to up the harsh ante: extremely nasty scraping, ripping, and tearing whose unrelenting abrasiveness is guaranteed to leave you hyper-sensitive and twitching. In other words, all primed and ready for **Skin Crime's** densely packed "White Trash Serenade," though I personally think a reference to nuclear holocaust or getting doused with pepper spray would have been more appropriate. Hmmm...maybe not. Following are two "ambient" pieces: **One Dark Eye** with some bass rumblings and decidedly perverse chalk-board scratchings, and **Daniel Menche's** even deeper rumblings and less perverse, albeit catchy, tweetering shriek. **Taint**, whose concern with being perverted has occasionally outstripped their commitment to harshitude, unleash the mother of all walls of sweet brutality. I take back everything I said about this guy. More to the point, I'll add a few more comments. Ouch. Ouch. And, YE-ESS. Mother Savage provided a special *Americanoise* mix of their soon-to-be classic bout of %100 mangled "metal percussion" which doesn't so much speak for itself as confirm your worst fears about the human condition and explain not only why Hitler was a vegetarian, but why he always walked around with a pickle up his ass. **Abfall's** mutilated drones might have benefited from a little more in-your-face raging yowl and less of that "power electronics" oscillating. Or maybe it's just the **Stimbox** in me, who, noise next, with of all things, some in your face yowl: less of the same, and more of a treat for those big on agitated, shrieking electronics that slowly burn themselves out into candy-flossed oblivion. **Namanax** fool around with petty loops of bass humping before the inevitable urge to fondle power tools and small furry animals overwhelms and chaos ensues. Finally, **Emil Beaulieu** returns accompanied by huge slabs 'o sound and chunky blats of feedback.

From the get-go, Side B sounds suspiciously familiar to Side A, except here the crunching has been replaced by a more simple grabbing the face and repeatedly bashing it into a brick wall. Second time around, its another world entirely. First up, a meaty ejaculation of pure filth from **Death Squad**: disclosed synapses and sarcastic earlobes. Next, **Crank Sturgeon** flail themselves alive to the uneven beat of some poor sod engaged in a little unenthusiastic "hide the power saw". Nearly shat myself right there, but fortunately, was able to hold out at least until Macro had their way. **Macronympha**, whose noise I have previously endeavored to describe using a tired old lawn mower analogy (the kind with that awful habit of running over people), appear this time to have invested in a combine harvester: we're talking pure mind-buggery and heaps of endless devastation. Careful not to trod in it though. **Limacon** venture deeper into the realm of bass-induced pelvic pulverization -- heavy on the death rays and little weirdoes kicking old, ex-opera stars in the shins -- discreetly pointing one toward **Red Zone**: another Macro pseudonym dedicated to ripping open pelvises and strangling the listener with rolled-up strips of rectal intestine. **Ex-Orphx** harsh noise side project **Tropism** again lead the poor listener astray, this time into a spat multi-textured tweeting and things-getting blown-up. **White Rose** (Mr. Charnel Music)


finally provide some much needed breathing room with their "Dedication to the Unabomber": bloodied metal scraping, and things-getting-blown-up that talk. Dead Angel guru **Chinawhite** go educational on the arse with a sadistic oven cleaning experiment, possibly aided by a fat, screaming transvestite freak stuck in a chimney whilst naughty children giggle and shriek with delight at his pathetic attempts at blowing out the fire they keep fueling up. In a similar vein, **AMK/The Haters** dish out exactly what the initiated would expect: destroyed collage and thawed-out mosaic of everything any motherfucker who thinks America is a free country would love. Then its time for "Cocaine Erection," a title which describes exactly this Macronymphonic mix-up mixdown, surprisingly devoid of overloaded crunch, and cut into several satisfying spews of demented screech and dyslexic squawk. Last of all, **Death Squad's** Charlie FF guided tour through the fuckroots of a septic tank left over from the cold war. Easily the best-all (North) American noise comp of the year. MSNP. JK.

AMON - Amon CD

OK, a real quickie. I just got this CD, and while I'm supposed to be wrapping this zine up, I was so impressed with it I couldn't let it wait a whole year to be reviewed. Downright spooky electronic ambience that's stretched out over 6 long tracks, and features a similarly cold and unsettling ambience as what you'll find on **Schloss Tegal's Oranur III** CD (minus the conceptual baggage and samples). Fully submerge yourself and let the glassy, resonating textures surround you and the all encompassing, tonal undercurrent drag you down to the deepest of depths. A total sleeper that ranks with the best of 'em. Murder Release.JM.

RON ANDERSON/ TATSUYA YOSHIDA - First Meeting CD.

I've yet to develop a taste for improvisational free form music, and this collaboration between members of the **Molecules** (Ron) and the **Ruins** (Tatsuya) doesn't help matters much... especially when the liner notes try to project some sort of brilliance underlying it all. Where might that might be I wonder? Granted, the frenetic energy and chemistry created by the meeting of these minds is hard to ignore, and



BACILLUS

CLOT-01 Pregnant Disease Formation
Debut release spreads infectious noise cells that invade and unleash their pestilence. Sounds of internal strife and internal bleeding. "Music of electric chair vaults"-Arc 4

CLOT-02 The Second Shock Left the Patient Dead
Intense as organ failure. Churning, grinding, parasitic nightmares that overload your brain, sending you into a psychotic rage before you die. "Rough abstract reverberations and mechanistic nihilism"-Godsend 03.95

CLOT-03 Epidemic
Dense cell walls of cancerous noise for the plague at hand. You'll be writhing, not with life, but with infestation. Soundtrack for the diseased to decay to. "Straps on a 2 foot noise dildo and shoves it up your ass"-Audio Drudge 6

CLOT-07 Black Plague
The vanguard of the coming plague, harsh infected sounds collapses your vital functions, laying to waste your entire body as the pandemic noise takes over. Remember, each round of vomiting might be your last.

EROSORE

CLOT-04 Invisible Sheath Urinal
Dynamic and engaging, varied sounds and atmospheres pull you in and force you out of a tiny hole into a plastic receptical for easy disposal. Bladder pressure increases.

CLOT-06 Excision Kit
Sharply defined sounds and textures excises unwanted limbs. Provocative sequences keeps the mind occupied while the blood is let free from the shackles of the body. Remove all appendages.

WOMB


CLOT-05 Rude Emergences
One member's destroyed noise attack blends with the other's ambience to create noisy, murky, ear-filling atmospheres for your next rebirth experience. The uterus is not always a safe place.

CLOT-06 Live
Two live tracks from one of the loudest performances the unsuspecting venue has ever seen. An uneasy balance between harshness and organic atmospheres for you to curl up in a fetal ball. Imagine uterine wall vibrations.

MACROBACILLUS

CLOT-09 Diarrhetic Discharges Vol.1
Part of a 3 volume release, this is a most extreme collaboration between Bacillus and Macronympha. Churning, grating sounds to induce dysentery, expelling chunky streams blackened with bits of necrotised intestinal wall lining that'll burn coming out. A limited edition of only 69, so hurry now, or you'll be shit out of luck! Includes sick color covers. Vol. II and III to be released later in 1996.

All releases are chrome C-20's in special packaging. Prices for all releases are \$4 within U.S., \$5 world, postpaid. U.S. funds only, payable to Peter Keller. Distributors: inquire about wholesale rates.



CLOTTED MEAT PORTIONING

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on that level I can appreciate it. But 15 tracks of seemingly endless guitar jams and drum bashing ultimately becomes like a tiring rehearsal session rather than pure academia or artistry. If this is some sort of new frontier I'd rather it remain unexplored. Commercial Failure. JM.

ANENZEPHALIA - Ephemeral Dawn CD.

Despite the fact that the majority of this CD was recorded live, it lacks much of the outward aggression that dominated their appearance at Festival Karlsruhe. But, even a more subdued *Anenzephalia* is somehow inexplicably intense, managing to give rise to a variety of moods and affections, most prominent among them a rather severe feeling of nausea and sickening unease. Be sure, *Ephemeral Dawn* will have you squirming in your seat as infectious, power drunk loops, drones, buzzes and low range, tension-building oscillating electronics burrow and worm their way into pores and under the skin. Music this monotone and one dimensional rarely if ever relies or succeeds on its subtleties, so it's virtually a requirement that this be played as loud as humanly possible for maximum, ultra-pulverizing effect. If, after doing that you still don't agree this is a massive release, you come see me and I'll gladly help you pull your head out of your ass. Tesco. JM.

APHASIA - Required CS.

Abstract music without confines that requires a quiet listening environment to catch some of its more subtle highlights. Sudden outbursts of recontextualized "noise" are followed by silence and or a disquieting au natural ambience that will have you traveling back and forth to your stereo to adjust the volume. I put noise in parentheses because most anything put up against the unobtrusive sections here becomes jarring, but it ranges from noise in the "traditional" *Merzbow* sense to noise in a more abstract form -- samples/tapes of dance music and metal etc. Feels ridiculously short (mostly because it is) but consider it a precursor to an upcoming CD on Realization (a split with *Dichise*). Available from Pylon Distribution. JM

THE ARBITRARY NATURE OF MEANING - Various Artists CD.

This is the kind of compilation I've had enough of....14 different bands, all with completely different sounds and (seemingly) little or no thought on the part of the compiler as to how they may relate to each other and/or how they're positioned on the CD. The result is more disorienting than anything and consequently all the more difficult to appreciate. With the exception of an inspiring and haunting vocal piece from *Randy Greif*, a droney fine spun piece of organi-ambient minimalism from *Jim O'Rourke*, and an introductory piece by *IOS*, I'm not sure I can even pick a track that I liked (but then, even *IOS*' track can be found on *Distraction* so that doesn't really count). Songs I especially found offensive were *B.C.O.*'s far too long exercise in word pronunciation, *Simon Wickham-Smith* and a *Band*'s talentless, jumbled, junky, and just plain awful free-style "rock/noise", and *Automaticity*'s warbly, gratingly noisy "Aimless". I could go into detail concerning tracks from *Basic Noise*, *Condemek*, *Dead His*

Name is Alive...but it'd all seem rather pointless wouldn't it? A study on how not to do a compilation more than anything, I now direct you to *Statics* to see how it *should* be done. I like *Isomorphic* as a label, and I'm glad to see they survived even after releasing this dreck. *Isomorphic Records*. JM.

ARCANA - Dark Age of Reason CD.

Of the fifteen bands featured on the European version of the *...And Even Wolves Hid Their Teeth* compilation, it was probably *Arcana* who managed to leave the most sizable impression. Following on the heels of that appearance were two equally as impressive tracks on the quickly sold out and nearly impossible to find *Hearts of Shadow Gods* double 7", that left me and many others, drooling in anticipation for the release of their CD. And so here it is, short enough at a mere 37 minutes that it feels more like an extended CDEP rather than a full length, but with 10 songs total, it has just enough material to satisfy those with itchings to hear more from this talented Swedish male/female duo. Comparison's to *Dead Can Dance* will be made, and they are inevitable and justified, with *Arcana*'s approach to instrumentation and composition being nearly identical to something like "De Profundis" off of *Dead Can Dance*'s *Spleen and Ideal*. But in terms of nobility, elegance and ambrosial opulence, *Arcana* manage to take things a few steps further, with each song a genuine embodiment of sweet sorrow wrapped up in decadent electro-symphonic melodia; woefully baroque wood winds, gently plucked strings, flowing violin orchestrations, beautiful piano melodies, and of course, the heavenly blending of baritone and soprano vocals courtesy of Peter Pettersson and the beautiful *Ida Bengtsson* (ooppa!). Yes, it's all been done before in some form or another, but who am I to chastise the band for doing it this damn good? Also available on LP. CMI. JM.

ARCANTA - Arcanta CD.

For those of restless mind and questing spirit, much of life balances between contemplating the Void and avoiding being devoured by it; between experiencing fully the excruciating, exquisite pain of existence and striving to transcend it, aspiring to the spiritual truths concealed inside and beyond it. *Arcanta* expressed this spiritual quest in some of the most moving Medieval-styled music I have heard -- and most importantly, *felt* -- since I first listened to *Dead Can Dance*. Brother Tom, perhaps better described as cantor than singer, uses his strong baritone voice to contemplate the world and it's pain, while the rest of the group conjures ancient atmospheres with dulcimer, electric and acoustic guitar, and keyboard drones and washes. The group moves from a meditation on the desolation of spiritual isolation in the wrenching opening invocation ("A Fools' Cry"), through deep visioning in a wilderness both external and internal, ending in silent gazing at the ageless stars ("Desert Prayer"), to the only piece sung fully in English rather than chanted mostly in Latin, a wondering at the illusions of attachment to things and emotions that cloud reality, but at the same time join us to all the world in complete unity ("Maya"), and ends with a mystical paean

to sorrow, intoned by a lone supplicant circled by shadowy figures in gray robes stirred by a hill breeze never felt by the living, as dream-voices mumble in the subconscious surroundings and deep drones weight an atmosphere already burdened with the grumbling of unquiet stones shifting in catacombs gleaming white with the bones of lost generations. My only complaint is that this is a 25 minute maxi-CD rather than the full-length promised soon to come from *Arcanta*. A must for fans of *Dead Can Dance* or *Raison D'Etre*-style sounds, or anyone whose sense of the gothic incudes atmosphere-laden chants that demands engagement rather than detachment. Projekt. DA.

ARS MORIENDI - The Last Document 7".

I'm assuming the title of this means *Ars Moriendi* is no longer in existence? Too bad, they appear to have been doing some nice stuff! *The Last Document* consists of three varied percussion/rhythmic pieces, the most intense of which is the last track "Endlich!", which sounds something like *Dive*, if he was getting the shit kicked out of him while on-stage that is. The A side isn't quite as visceral or in your face with "Deeper Trance" covering similar territory as early *Klinik* and "Armageddon" building to a nice climax of intensifying rhythms, discordant guitar notes, and tortured, female vocals. Would have been nice to see where these guys went with this, but I guess we'll never know. A nice way to end things at least. Ant-Zen. JM.

ATRAUX MORGUE - Sickness Report CD

Having been forced to listen to *Atrax Morgue* on cassette for several years now, the first thing I noticed about Marco's debut CD is how freaking loud it is! Forced into the digital realm, with no annoying tape hiss or muddled production to stand in its way, the sounds are crystal clear and well defined, and therefore one hundred times more potent and heavy than they ever were on cassette. Completely improvised and recorded spontaneously in one hour, the nine tracks offered flow together to the point where they become virtually indistinguishable from one another, and *Sickness Report* becomes like one long piece of deviant, death obsessed brutality. Fiercely overloaded analog frequencies are the norm with *Atrax Morgue*, and they are typically unleashed in two forms...there's the higher pitched, fluttering sound waves and oscillations that dominate the top end of the spectrum, and then there's the lower pitched, wide-band electronics that pulse and throb on the bottom end, adding some extra weight and helping to fully round out the *Atrax Morgue* sound. No one, particularly me, is ever going to accuse *Atrax Morgue* of being complex, and indeed, *Sickness Report* is an overtly simplistic recording and I think, that had it been any longer than it's short 32 minutes and boredom would surely have been a major complaint. As it stands though, it's a good introduction to not only *Atrax Morgue*, but to the new-wave of Italian power electronics in general. As to where he'll go with the slew of upcoming releases planned...well, that remains to be seen, but I would think some more variation is needed if Marco is to make any sort of substantial impact. Relapse. JM.

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ATTRITION - 3 Arms and a Dead Cert CD.

Lovely, operatic female vocals and danceable hard electro beats. Classical viola and distorted male vox. Harsh and gentle, industrial and gothic, electronic and organic, these opposites all have one thing in common: they are combined ingeniously to make up this attractive new slice of a twisted electronic world from Martin Bowes and Co. of *Attrition*. There aren't any bad tracks here, although the ones in the first half of the album sound a bit too much like each other for my taste -- like finding the perfect recipe and then just using it to make the same (really good) thing over and over instead of risking something new. Why mess with success? Still, the risks Bowes does take always turn out for the best. Like "One of These Mornings," with its subconscious female vocals, sampled child-voices, and electronic variations underscoring the central theme: "one of these mornings the sun's gonna come up and burn a hole clean through the planet like an electrical x-ray." Viola phrases carefully woven into the mix provide the perfect sense of formal unreality to the controlled chaos of the track. Or the spooky "Predicament?" with its angelic female voice backing samples of various near-death experiences, acoustic piano, mournful viola, and dark ambient electronics. This song really tripped me out in a pleasantly melancholy and innovatively gothic (!) way, as did "Red Eye," which had a lot of the same points in it's favor. The title track, "3 Arms and a Dead Cert," has a void-like spacey-ambient feel, with baby cries and child laughter, that matures into a full string section, solo viola, and urgent female voice highlighted with almost bombastic percussion. Very neurotic and worrying. Fans of dark electro-industrial should

churning, bodily rhythm detected within otherwise breathy, tunnel-like realms. Don't know what sort of manipulative techniques, if any, were applied to these sounds, or whether Akifumi did any sort of editing or not, but it proceeds comfortably into varying areas of volume and intensity. As each piece progresses, so does the degree of activity... initial subtleties eventually consumed by turbulent layers of nondescript noises. Truly one of a kind work. God Factory -- available from Staalplaat. JM.

AUBE - Re-chant/De-Coda 7"

Considering the label's penchant for traditionally atmospheric oriented projects, an *Aube* 7" on Drone would seem a rather unlikely combination. But the new *Aube* is not the old *Aube*, and more current releases (*Magnetostriktion* or the split 3"CD w/ L.O.S.D.) seem to have more in common with ambient than they do noise. Whether or not this more palatable trend is a long-lasting one remains to be seen, but the one thing that has remained constant is Akifumi's masterful manipulative techniques and knack for turning the mundane into the sublime. On "Re-Chant/De-Coda" we find him transforming the female voice into something totally beyond comprehension. Side A is the quieter of the two... a slow, drunken sounding "gong" sets the scene and repeats throughout the side, but whatever calming effect it may have had initially is eaten alive by the wails and whiney howls that ring out around it. For lack of a less concrete description, it'd be like setting a box of cats on fire and throwing it into the middle of a Japanese prayer session. Whereas the source

definitely check this out, as should anyone interested in hearing what operatic industrial might like sound -- that may not be an "accepted" genre, but it's the best way to describe what *Attrition* does, and does very well. Projekt. DA.

AUBE

Magnetostriktion CD.

With previous works utilizing oil, water, glow lamps, lungs, and heartbeats, few are more adept at finding unique source material than Akifumi Nakajima. For *Magnetostriktion*, we find him exploiting a magnetic resonance spectroscopy -- an instrument typically used by hospitals to record sounds inside the body. As you can imagine, the end product is entirely unique. It is however, the most subdued *Aube* recording I've heard yet...the sounds of internal digestion and

may be marginally detectable on side A, it's all but totally masked and disguised on Side B. With it's rising pitch changes and droney squalls, what's emitted comes off sounding more like a series of whacked out guitar manipulations than anything that could have possibly come from a larynx. Drone. JM.

BACILLUS - Black Plague CS.

Bacillus' fourth cassette is neatly packaged in a folded over pouch and comes with a small booklet detailing, in horrifyingly graphic specifics, what happens when a deadly contagion decides to hunker down in your body; I quote "...the vomiting continues, long after the stomach should've been empty. The regurgitated stew of tarry granules mixed with fresh arterial blood smells like a slaughterhouse. A microbe is inside the host, attempting to convert the host into itself, turning flesh into a sort of biological accident"....and so on....you can imagine for yourself what the end result is. Peter Keller has made the whole virus thing his fixation (or raison d'etre as it were) and it remains firmly entrenched as the center for all his works, consistently making what I did with *Invisible Domains* look and sound wimpy in comparison. Had I known Peter was such an expert on this stuff, by the very least I would have had him write the liner notes for it (instead of stealing it from '48 Hours'). It's also, not coincidentally, what makes his work so notable. Reading the titles, and is the case with *The Black Plague* the booklet, is half the fun of *Bacillus* and I find myself consistently amazed that he finds new inspiration in all of this. I ran out of things to say about the ebola virus a long time ago, but Peter continues to come up with different takes and imaginative angles. Anyway, this is turning into a really long review for what is a 20 minute cassette, so it's best I get down to business. With titles like "Massive Skin Lesions" or "Tear In Protective Layer" one can be sure that *Bacillus* comes prepared to back them up with the music to match the images they conjure. And like the very virus' he pays homage to, it's brutal and unstoppable ... short pieces that start harsh and get only harsher as loops are built upon and layers of deep ripping noises and brittle, sharp metallic outbursts are added. Thick and in constant motion, it'll have your nipples bleeding and your intestinal track sloughing quicker than you can say "epidemic". Clotted Meat Portioning. JM.

BATCHAS - Live in Nevers LP.

Live industrial albums used to be the bane of my existence, as they always seemed to be too spontaneous and lacked focus. I've since loosened up a bit and it's LPs like this one from Switzerland's *Batchas* that have made me realize the error of my former ways. The recording is from 1995's "Musiques Ultimes" festival in France. It starts up with some delirious rumbling which slowly builds and leads into some nicely layered atmospheric effects. From there the sounds begin to pick up a bit and gives way to cascading loops of sinister and menacing electronics which continue through most of the performance, until the end when everything climaxes into a ritualistic sensoria with an insistent sequenced rhythm providing the backbone. The overall feel

of this album is such that it straddles the line between ambient music and power electronics, and its difficult to classify which genre it more closely resembles. It's really easy to forget that this is a live LP, as the coherent and logical path the sounds follow makes it better than many studio efforts by like-minded outfits. Neat package too: the covers feature a glued-on linoleum tile, while the disc is on hazy clear vinyl. This one really should not be missed. White Noise/Noise Museum. JS.

BATTERIE ACID - Eyes Not Open 7"

Exceptionally well done music that's built around ferocious, urgent percussion (both metallic and conventionally "tribal") a la **Crash Worship**, but made much more multi-dimensional due to a liberal application of samples, driving bass, frantic vocals and a focus on actual composition. Made me want to smear myself with pigs blood and dance around with a hatchet....naked of course. Just plain great. Alleysweeper. JM.

BEEQUEEN - Sugarbush CD.

After what I thought was a disappointing release in *Time Waits for No One* (too unfocused), **Beequeen** redeems themselves with *Sugarbush*. Restored are some of the same components that made *Der Holzweg* the exceptional release that it was... pieces flowing into each other amidst vapory, gaseous fumes foggy ambience and drones incorporating just the right amount of organic and electro-acoustic sounds so that they don't intrude, but add depth and character while still remaining light to the ear. **Beequeen's** music seems to lie comfortably within the realm of dreams....not heavy handed fathomless 2:00AM dreams, more the kind that come when daylight has begun to filter through the shades. Concrete when they are occurring, but quick to disperse the moment the eyes are opened. Recommended. Raum 312...distro thru Anomalous. JM.

BELT - The Killing Verdict CD.

The 6 songs here are the venting of a troubled soul... the simmerings of anger turned red hot boiling rage, the intent nothing short of maximum harm. **Belt** is pissed, doesn't like you, and does a damn good job of making sure you know it. After a two minute intro piece ("Black & Tan") of blurring guitar and hoarse garbled vocals, **Belt** settles down into a disquieting hushthe rage momentarily dispersed, but sure to build quickly, erupting again in any one of the following pieces. And so the formula is put into place.... becoming somewhat predictable by discs end albeit, but always surprising in its savageness. Rigid loops lay the foundation in most of the songs, and if they are the spine of this recording, then the smothering atmospheres and dark, tortured guitar noises (and, as is the case with "Jesus Christ Told Me To Fuck You Up", or "Milk", even melodic) comprise the vertebrae and chewy sinew that surrounds it. The true meat of this disc however, comes from the abused larynx of Joel. Treated and used as an instrument onto itself, he screams, seductively whispers (though hardly sweet nothings), and emphatically commands his way into one caustic, tension filled climax after another. An exercise in raw, primitive emotion which you'll

want to experience only on disc...perhaps the only way to ensure you won't get hurt. Freedom In a Vacuum. PO Box 862, Station F, Toronto, Ont., M4Y 2N7, Canada.JM.

BIG CITY ORCHESTRA - The Consumer CD.

Ah, those too numerous faceless moments of commercial vapidity that each and every one of us has endured. Programmed for complete retention and mind control, advertising bores into the core of our pathetic psyche, head nodding, yes master, yes, I'll consume at your bidding. Society latches onto commercials, letting their values, thoughts, and lives be defined by a thirty second saccharine pill. **Begseyd Urkenstur's** *Consumer* CD digests these all-too-familiar hawkings and regurgitates them back as off-kilter name brand mockery covers with hints of **The Residents**, forcing grins on even the most brain washed of individuals (No smiling! Consume! Consume!). Perceptions of favorite commercials will forever be shattered as each bizarre send-up cuts through the slick catchy gloss shell and exposes the ugly absurdity of each message. No doubt you'll be left wandering the streets, life coldly empty, no more plastic-smiled reassurances that planned- adolescent products will make your life go down as easy as a well-oiled turd. You will have to think for yourself. And if you think that 57 tracks of deprogramming aren't enough, after you are freed of your shackles, there is, for your use and enjoyment in your new found freedom, 42 extra tracks of **B.C.O.** sound effects. So what are you waiting for? Buy it! Commercial Failure. PK.

BIG CITY ORCHESTRA - Grass 7"

Sick Muse's first vinyl outing see's **B.C.O.** taking on two tracks, both entitled "Grass" but bearing no resemblance otherwise, originally

done by Robert Wyatt and **XTC**, respectively. Not having heard the originals, I can't say how much these two pieces have been 'bastardized' by **B.C.O.**, but they do send their "deepest heartfelt apologies" to both artists if that's any indication. It sounds like Wyatts original vocals are sampled, then put over some rolling tribal-esque rhythms as supplied by the ubuibi group. Musically, it's nothing too special, but lyrically it's downright strange and quite hilarious ... Wyatt's raspy and "dirty old-man" vocals coming off sounding a lot like an even more deranged (!) William S. Burroughs. "While we talk I'll hit your head with a mallet and make you understand me!"..."when I'm gone you can feel the lumps on your head and think about what I said". Ha, ha...the shit's too funny not too mention a tad bit unsettling. Who is this guy anyway?? Someone I suppose I should know, but don't. **XTC's** side starts off really nice with some low, shipyard growls before lapsing into a pleasant folky piece ripe with nostalgic lyrics and sung in a bright female voice. This plays out pretty straightforward and there doesn't seem like much input from **B.C.O.** with the exception of a windy rumble that pipes it's way in as the songs closing out. Sandwiched in between two damn-ugly slabs of astro-turf, *Grass* is purely strange entertainment, but then, this is **B.C.O.** we're talking about, and I expect nothing less. Sick Muse Recordings, PO Box 28664, Bellingham, WA. 98228. JM.

BIG CITY ORCHESTRA/VOICE OF EYE - Tryst 8 CS.

Each band gets a side of this fun 60 minute tape, and the music itself is almost an afterthought to the excavation adventure I went through to separate the tape from the apartment-floor detritus (crumbs, seeds, various pieces of paper, and even a cookie - I think)

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shoveled into the baggie along with it. I had to put this thing in a cabinet to keep my cats away from it! The booklet also includes some neat recipes. **Voice of Eye** is barely recognizable here, except for a couple brief passages where their more serious mind warpage mode peeks through. The instrument list: samples (shock!), voice, trombone, Tibetan bells, bamboo flutes, with electronically generated noises and random music snippets meandering around. Not too many layers here, the sounds chase after one another in quick succession, but aren't so busily flailing that the mind is overwhelmed by junk. OK. **Big City Orchestra** presents "digestion with musical nutrition" with filmstrip beeps and musical (sic) interludes between bits of narration on a hilarious digestive theme. Somewhat improvised -- a grab bag of lo-fi musical passages using random styles and instrumentation, some electronic, some acoustic. Some parts of this are concrete -- kitchen utensils are "played" and some cooking sounds are used as source material. Ubuibi. TJ.

BLACK LEATHER JESUS/RICHARD RAMIREZ - Scrapyrd PicLP.

For this rather mundanely packaged picture LP (minus any notes or titles) **Ramirez** does his own thing on one side, then jumps over to join his spot in his full time outfit, **Black Leather Jesus**. **BLJ** rip through one long track with reckless abandon...creating a piece so thick and in perpetual motion it's almost symphonic in the most discordant way imaginable. Skyrocketing dives of sound fight it out with steamy feedback whistles, crashing destruction, curdling spats of mid-range frequencies... all propelled forth with a fast paced and highly charged inertia. Remarkable for how much shit they actually cram in here...and yet it never, not for one minute, becomes tedious or overbearing, much of that due to the constant variation of textures. When it's over the silence is all but deafening. **Ramirez** takes control over the other side with two tracks, but they lack the range, multi-dimensional dynamics, and potency of it's bigger brother. Mostly just low-end rumble, obscured loops, and violent tears and rips, it's sense of fluidity is broken up by the high pitched squeals of a machine under duress and scraps of fluttering frequencies. It ain't bad... but put next to the incredible offering from **BLJ** and it becomes formulaic and banal. The question arises though, is it worth getting for the **BLJ** side alone? You bet your arse it is. Praxis Dr. Bearmann. JM.

BLACK TAPE FOR A BLUE GIRL - The First Pain to Linger CD.

With this 34-minute-maxi-CD and 92-page book, Sam Rosenthal simultaneously reveals the roots of **Black Tape for a Blue Girl**'s last album *This Lush Garden Within*, and brings this period of his art to a close. The book tells the story of how Sam opened himself to loving Susan, who inspired *This Lush Garden Within*. Consisting of seven tracks, two previously unreleased and five from various compilations, the disc is a nice introduction for those unfamiliar with **BTFBG**, and a must for die-hard fans. All the tracks occupy the warm ethereal ambient realm Projekt has almost single-handedly defined; synth washes and gently strummed guitars combine with floating

female vocals to produce a sensation of being suspended in a nurturing ocean of sound. I was especially charmed by the shiny, ringing wine-glass like synth and guitar of "the glass is shattered," in whose somberly contemplative tone I saw portrayed a man sitting alone at a kitchen table bathed in afternoon sunlight, staring at a broken glass occupying an empty place at the table, wondering: "the glass is shattered / is that what makes it beautiful?" The ebbing and flowing guitar (guested by Ryan Lum of **Love Spirals Downwards**) and dancing lights in fog evoked by the keyboards made "overwhelmed, beneath me" a standout track as well. And the menacing synth foundations of the closing, unnamed track support glittering undersea castles of sound, which build, shimmer, then swirl away in the dark currents. Although I enjoyed almost all of the tracks, I found the lack of continuity between them disturbing, even though I knew this was a compilation LP and I shouldn't expect continuity. Still, this is a good place to start for those curious about **BTFBG**, and a welcome appetizer for their next full length album, due out in May. Projekt. DA.

BLOOD AXIS - The Gospel of Inhumanity CD.

So this is the infamous **Blood Axis**? I must confess, I was expecting a fuck of a lot more. Seems as if all the effort went into the packaging (which is very nice), with the music seriously lacking the substance to hold-up to it's hype and presentation. For an artist with such a forthrightly fascist ideology and strong convictions, I was anticipating music much more forceful and colossal than what's offered on the *Gospel of Inhumanity*. Instead, what I got was a series of barely stimulating neo-classical, sometimes atmospheric or electric guitar based, compositions, all of which seemed rather soft and flat in light of their titles and inspiration. Much as **Blood Axis** would like us to believe otherwise, there is very little authoritarianism or strength exuded in these works...nothing epic or convincing enough to persuade the listener over to "his" side. Samples are often mis-placed (especially in the wretched "Eternal Soul") or poorly mixed and when Moynihan steps forward to spew his agenda in his spoken, commanding voice it becomes almost laugh-able. Only the excellent, haunting atmospheres of "Between Birds of Prey" or stirring "Herr, nun laB in Frieden" had much of an impact, but even that lost a lot of the desired effect sandwiched among its brethren. I don't respect Moynihan much for his views, but I was willing to put my personal bias aside for the sake of what I thought would be good music. Fortunately, compromise wasn't necessary... something **Blood Axis** can surely appreciate. Storm. JM.

BLOODYMINDED - Trophy CD.

"Get in, get in the car! I'll take you for a ride...but at what cost? Not to me, to you!....Here's the turn off, too bad you'll be turned off! First by my idea of fun, then for good!" Just an example of the contrived and outright laughable lyrics found in almost every one of the 47 tracks of **Bloodyminded**'s debut CD. This is Mark Solotroff's new project after dis-banding **Intrinsic Action**, and those

lamenting the death of that project will certainly be ecstatic at their resurrection as **Bloodyminded**. As for me, I was never much of a fan, so having to sit through 74 minutes of stylistically similar material was near impossible. In all fairness, music wise it's quite decent. The singular, oscillating frequencies spewed out by the twin analog synths are simple, but often powerful and nauseating in that they seem to possess a unique piercing quality not all that dissimilar to lower end feedback. However, there's not a track present that doesn't feature Solotroff's incessant howls, so if you thought you could escape them, even for a second, you'd be sadly mistaken. Some sort of relief does come on "Overdrive" (Track 39). At twenty plus minutes it's about 6 times as long as any other track on *Trophy*, and also twice as powerful. Instead of screaming, Solotroff simply speaks, re-canting horrific details of crime scenes and murders in a dispassioned voice. This over some corrosive, fluctuating electronics that break from the monotony and rigidity of the other 46 tracks. Why not more of this?? I admit to getting some kicks out of this release and even enjoying it at times, but I'm not so sure that laughing out loud was the desired effect. Bloodlust! JM.

BLOWHOLE - Guerrilla Jazz LP.

Blowhole are yet another super-prolific project of Jeph Jerman, who is also known for his work with **Hands To** and **Big Joey**. As it should stand, this unit produces a lot of material, most of which is (or at least sounds) improvised. The material on this LP (previously available on cassette) is basically several tracks of atonal free-rumble movements, which are somewhat akin to similar efforts to **Smegma** or perhaps, **Ascension**. The majority of it is performed on rock instrumentation which means that while the album is noisy, it isn't very shrill or loud. **Blowhole** can also be credited with including occasional diversions to the ensuing chaos; "Control Group" features a pretty nice soaring trumpet, and there's even a cover of Albert Ayler's "Ghosts" (albeit, fairly recognizable...). Ultimately, this album is a lot less harsh than I had expected, and while its not super-pleasurable to listen to or anything, it certainly doesn't make me want to fill up my ear canals with sand, as some other improv discs have. Cool. Zabriskie Point. JS.

BLOWHOLE - A Love Extreme CD.

From it's John Coltrane takeoff title, to its weirdly minimal cover design, you know you're in for a ride when you sit down and soak in the grooves of this 2-LP monster. The tracks come from a variety of recording sources, which run the gamut from 4-track recordings, to a few which were recorded at an outdoor party with a hand held tape recorder. As you might imagine, this album is fairly extreme, moving from supremist squawk to glum lo-fi grumble, sometimes within the course of a single side. Four sides of this type of action may be a bit indigestible in one sitting, but in small doses, I'm reminded of some key references: side 2 of **Henry Cow**'s *Unrest*, the first LP by ZGA (any of you heard of this one?) and NYC's great **Doctor Nerve** which keeps my interest level high enough to dutifully flip the records when

the side finishes. There's quite a lot of diversity in these four sides, which is all the more reason for you to kidnap Wynton Marsalis at your next available opportunity, all the while forcing him to listen to this album at stun-volume while you kindly repeat "You see, this is jazz music" over and over. Alright! Zabriskie Point. JS.

GRAHAM BOWERS - Of Mary's Blood CD.

This has garnered a fair amount of positive press over in the UK and rightly so. Bowers ventures forth with a dazzling palate of sounds that combust and converge like broad brush strokes from a thousand blended colors. Forever in motion, it dances and sways like an endless stream of surreal consciousness, tones suspended in mid-air hanging precariously over an abyss of clangs, bows, and scrapes. Found sounds and other indistinguishable noises exude a dreamlike, bordering on nightmarish, quality, while unique atmospheres provide brisk dynamics and tickle the nerve endings. The cohesiveness and skillfully constructed strength of the sounds obscures what is generally a random and abstract creation. Sounds align themselves in strange, geometrical quagmires and configurations then come together as a solid writhing mass, only to break apart and dissipate into an infinite void. Ground breaking work that'll have your auditory system demanding an explanation. Red Wharf. JM.

BRIGHTER DEATH NOW - Necrose Evangelicum CD.

A CD of such impenetrable darkness its as if the entire world has collapsed onto itself! This is music created from a place beyond all imaginable Hell's...a place that exists only deep within the macabre mind of its creator, Roger Karmanik. Where he draws inspiration for these recordings can only be speculated, but suffice to say it's not a place one would like to spend their eternity! Tormented voices announce the birth of some unspeakable horror, while heavily metallic, grinding electronics shudder like the last gasps of a dying machine. Together, they form a vision so bleak and ghastly it purges both the mind and soul of everything but the most impure of thoughts. Leave all notions of decency at the entranceway, for they are not wanted nor needed here. Only in the final track, featuring the despondent orchestrations of *Mortuus*, will you find solace, but even that is a harbor deemed unsafe. C.M.I. JM.

BRIGHTER DEATH NOW - Great Death III CD.

Those of you lucky enough to own the *Great Death* box set should know well the card that was enclosed within it, and that this card sent along with your money to CMI put you on the list for the last installment of this black hearted series, *Great Death III*. My card was sent soon after I picked up my copy of *Great Death*, and with a release date of November 23, 1995, I had a full year to await it's arrival. Within a week of the passing of this date I opened my mailbox to find a package from Cold Meat Industry, and within it a new chapter of black death and sick images conveyed through harsh electronics courtesy of the man behind C.M.I. *Great Death III* is the opening track, which starts with 3:33 minutes of pure silence and closes after the first of several disturbing stories

on child sexual abuse. Indeed, the pedophilic implications are very prevalent here as witnessed in not only the packaging -- which abounds with pictures of naked or scantily clad children (presumably Karmaniks) -- but also in tracks like "Urinated", which starts with another sickening tale of molestation. As the story reaches it's most disturbing moments, we're hit by the first assault of harsh sound, arising from the dark depths and enveloping everything with a powerful loop and a series of high pitched electronics. The abuse of women, not children, seems to be at the center of "Female Blood" -- an intense piece of pulsing electronics, feedback, and a tone that at times sounds like distorted vocals or guitar lurching through the heavy atmosphere. After two tracks of purely atmospheric horror -- "Funeral Day" and "Open the Gates" -- the vocal bites are brought back in "Angel of Death", a faster paced noisy track centering around a recorded talk show whose discussion that day seems to have been with a necrophiliac. Screams fade away to more extended silence before being broken by the beginning of "Laudate Dominum III" -- a short segment spoken in Swedish, that I have heard (big surprise) is a rather blunt description of sexual perversion. Silence returns again (!) for a long period of time, only to be disrupted by two strange songs sung by children. Silence again rears it's ugly head, before we're finally given an uncredited and incredible new version of "Dead Bones" from BDN's *Slaughterhouse*. Thematically, *Great Death III* is unquestionably BDN's most disturbing (and worrisome) release, but it's strange overuse of silence detracts from it's musical impact. Still a great release and I can only say I'm sorry to see this horror end. Cold Meat Industry. BC.

BRIGHTER DEATH NOW - Innerwar CD.

B.D.N.'s first domestic release (for Relapse) is sure to surprise many in how totally harsh and brutal it is, owing it's overall sound more to the (pre-B.D.N.) *Lille Roger* style of power electronic noise, with it's abundance of frying, overloaded frequencies, high pitched feedback squeals, and mighty metallic grinds and scrapes, rather than the horrific moans and beyond-evil atmospheres of something like *Necrose Evangelicum* or *Great Death I & II*. For *Innerwar*, Roger strips himself of the total darkness typically associated with his work and takes us on an unadulterated journey into the kingdom of scum...it is here that child molesters roam and serial killers stalk, and filth, depravity, degradation, and subversity are the undisputed rulers of the land. Total gross out pics included! Relapse. JM.

BRUME VS. APHASIA - Series One Round One Split CD.

This is the first round in a series of split CDs be released by the newly formed Atmoject centered around "enviro-concrete soundscapes," and one can only hope that future pairings are as well conceived and complimentary as this one is. Even with an excessive amount of sound source utilized by both artists (the French *Brume* and the Scottish *Aphasia*) it never becomes bogged down or cluttered, though be warned as it does become rather jarring with both artists (particularly *Aphasia*) alternating

between a hushed quiet and downright boisterous loud. Stay on guard and watch that volume control and surely don't make the mistake of having it turned up to a ridiculously high level to catch it's more refined moments. Speaker shredding trouble is what you'll ask for, and speaker shredding trouble is what you'll get. *Brume* -- the king of this kind of stuff -- get first crack and offers 3 tracks containing some rather weighty source material; bunker air ducts, bunker chambers, rusty wrecks, guitar, wind instruments, small metallic objects, and many more. As you might expect, the bringing together of such an allotment of strange instrumentation can result in quite a din. *Brume*, to his credit though, controls everything with a heavy hand and a masterful technique. From eerie moans and echoing "clunks" to mechanical whirrs, drones, and rusty scrapes to the striking of objects both large and small (read loud and quiet and all points in between), the result is highly abstract but incredibly cohesive and fluid. *Brume* has conquered the fine art of turning contradictory and otherwise non-sensical sounds into something suddenly made logical and comprehensible. Many have tried, few have succeeded. With equal amounts of less musically oriented material to draw from (old people playing cards, streets, public interiors, twigs, old tape reels, melting snow, analog electronics etc), *Aphasia* is considerably less graceful about his methods. Whereas *Brume* proceeded in a rather linear and sensible fashion, *Aphasia* uses brute force and surprise tactics. With a series of sudden starts and stops, things can go from total minimalistic near silence into an overload of *Merzbow* inspired noise outbursts and heavily distorted sound bites. If the desired effect was to disorient and catch the listener off guard, then by all accounts, mission accomplished. It's hardly as one-dimensional or simplistic as I may have just made it out to be though, for there's a high degree of subtlety being used here and it often requires sitting directly in front of your speakers to catch it. Great stuff from both, though I declare *Brume* as the undisputed winner in this round. Of course, there's always the hope for a re-match. Atmoject - Aldersyde, Station Road, Banchory, Kincardineshire, AB31 5XX, Scotland, UK. JM.

C17H19NO3 - Terra Damnata CD.

I'm in complete awe of this CD. If you think the Swedes have a monopoly on daunting, apocalyptic, electronic music, then inject a dose of this into your veins and prepare to be blown away. By all accounts, *Terra Damnata* is one of the most well conceived and astounding works ever recorded by an American artist working in the field of dark atmospheric-industrial. Composed and produced solely by accomplished artist and musician John Bergin (*Trust Obey*), it is a monumental recording of eerie, gothically twinged landscapes, towering orchestrations, and suffocating, sometimes sensually, bleak atmospheres, whose only real competition I can see would be the formidable *In Slaughter Natives*. But, with the death of *In Slaughter* now imminent, C17 has diligently stepped forward to claim the illustrious throne. This is music designed for playing after the mushroom

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cloud has risen to the sky and the ashes of a dying planet have immersed the populus under a thick blanket of darkness. Horrifying mutations between machine and human have taken place and their struggle is played out in a series of dramatic scenarios, as exemplified in such amazing tracks like "The Lords of Bone and Machinery", "Androgynic" or the stunning title track. A must experience. Fifth Colvmn (yes, Fifth Colvmn). JM.

CHOP SHOP Plays EMIL BEAULIEU - Red and Buried CD.

Not the soundtrack to a train crash...more like being under one as the cars careen out of control and off the track. Steel and iron rend, grind, tear, and converge into an extreme symphony of deep, penetrating noise. Lots of layers building and crashing into one another, sometimes lapsing into a monotone, white noise drone (where its at its best), but mostly just swirling infinitely. Total obliterating insanity that I'd thought I'd find unlistenable, but varied, textured, and so fucking out there that it was enough to keep me interested. Recommended, but only if you think you can hack it. Pure. JM.

CHRISTIAN MARCLAY/ GÜNTER MÜLLER - Live Improvisations CD.

Christian Marclay has always been an artist I liked more in theory than in practice: his technique (playing and changing records at random on multiple turntables) is fine, but his recorded output has always seemed a bit under-nourished. Well, the famine is over. This magnificent CD is everything I'd always hoped for and more: Christian's skittering turntable hyjinx are in top form, and Günter Müller's furious electronics and drums overlay a perfect counterpoint. As you can probably imagine, a hyperactively intense ruckus is created here, so it would be fair to name this disc as the analog sister to John Oswald's *Plexure*. This fact, coupled with the attendant package, which is as phenomenal as the sounds on disc, combine to make this a highly recommended release. For 4 Ears, Steinechtweg 16, 4452 Itingen, Switzerland. JS.

CLAIR OBSCUR - Play/In-Out/ Rock CDs.

How do you describe the music of a band whose very name is an oxymoron? I suppose I could start by telling you that in their native France, "clair-obscur" is an idiom meaning "chiaroscuro, light and shade," but that hardly clears things up. Or I could tell you that **Clair Obscur** delights in bringing together unexpected arrangements of classical instruments such as flute and trumpet with vocals by turns delicate and shrieking and strange electronics. Or I could talk about how they sing in three languages -- mostly English, but also French and German. I could even echo the press release and say "file under cold wave". Or maybe I could just let the music speak for itself. But that's not really an option, is it? In fitting tribute to their iconoclastic approach to music, I'll start with **Clair Obscur**'s latest album *Rock*, which is also the only one of these three releases to contain "new" material. I put "new" in quotes because they started work on *Rock* in 1990, but had to wait until late in 1993 to finish the album due to

financial problems. Although *Rock* is the most approachable of the three releases, it is by no means a sell-out or even a compromise. Yes, there are a lot of catchy pop hooks, esp. in the first couple of tracks. But there are also a lot of very risky arrangements that only **Clair Obscur** would have the balls to attempt and the skill to get away with (with the able assistance of a host of guest musicians) My favorite song on the album is one of these, an endearing bit of silliness called "Downtown": "luv is kind of dickie lip/luv is kind of lucky dip". Over a cool bass riff the band layers all sorts of stuff, including traditional percussion, fast guitar, and odd synthetic sounds. The more meditative "We Went," with its Edward Ka-Spellian quiet synth and piano opening and lyrics ("we went as far as the moon and all its stars/where we saw nothing but holes filled with nothing"), moving into dark percussion, clarinet, and flute, leads you on a whirlwind tour of **Clair Obscur**'s weird and wonderful avant-garde style.

Really, though, there isn't a bad track among the 14 on *Rock* (42 minutes total time). Whether you're into calliopes, metronomes, string quartets, musique concrete, dance music, or lyrics by turns wistful and bitingly sarcastic, *Rock* has something just for you.

In Out resulted from a performance art piece the band presented in 1986; it was originally released in 1988. the work is a giant step away from the early *Death in June* influenced material gathered on *Play* (see below). Based almost entirely around classical instruments and quasi-operatic vocal arrangements, yet nonetheless retaining the melancholy "Apocalypse Culture" feel of their early work, *In Out* just goes to show you how beautifully bizarre **Clair Obscur** really are.

Although some of the songs on *In Out* veer dangerously close to self-parody, most work well in the end. Picture a chamber orchestra conducted by David Tibet of **Current 93**, playing material written by the Russian mystical composer Scriabin, for performance at a festival honoring Franz Kafka, and you'll have a good grasp of *In Outs* general vibe.

I particularly enjoyed "Artistic Slaughter," a percussion-driven piece with just enough cello to smooth and darken the mood. Violins swoop down from the leaden gray sky like birds of ill omen, landing on a huge tree with no leaves, only skeletal branches spreading beneath the heartless heavens, while man resting his double-bowed back against the base of the tree muses on death and madness: "you should have seen her laying on the ground/ the red red blood on her red red lips / will you kill me?" **Clair Obscur**'s dirge-like, death folk cover of Robert Burns' "Auld Lang Syne" also has to be heard to be believed. My only real complain about *In Out* is it's too damn short -- only 32 minutes, which isn't a lot when you're paying CD prices.

Play compiles two long out-of-print early albums, *La Cassette Noire* (1982) and *Danse* (1984), giving you 13 tracks (naturally) and 40 minutes of music. *Play* just goes to show you that there's nothing new under the sun -- this was dark ambient long before anyone coined the term. The opening "Sequence" has strong Lustmordian overtones: behind a repeated thunder-noise a monster groans horribly, while a UFO flits back and forth overhead. "Last

Encounter" and "Blume" were both included on the later *In Out* album, but these early experimental electronic versions differ so radically from the remakes that they might as well be different songs entirely.

Most of *La Cassette Noire* has a very alienated, dis-focused feeling; a Lovecraftian sense of knowing things you wish you didn't know about, the existence of things that shouldn't be, and drowning yourself in absinthe to forget, only to end up remembering more and more. "K.G." and "Vivant," as well as the tracks already mentioned, are drenched with this feeling, a sense of sunless vastnesses half-glimpsed, of a descent into the dark heart of something completely inhuman. Very apocalyptic electronic music from the depths of hell, but a subtle hell, communicating terror and revulsion in quiet ways, not loud screaming horror. That lurks in the background, though....

Finally we get to *Danse*, **Clair Obscur**'s nod to the underground dance scene. This material would not have sounded at all out of place next to early **Sisters of Mercy**, and no doubt many a European gothic DJ made just that connection in their early '80s clubs sets. All four tracks from this album have great beats and the deep male vocal thing going on, with a bit of **Sopor Aeternus** type dying screech twist. Personally, I get enough of this thing real quick, and I found most of these tracks soulless and repetitive. "Zeda" in particular, is just plain bad -- voice not in tune, instruments out of sync, etc. "Die Kinder Sind Allein" ("The Children Are Alone"), though, from the impossible to find *Death in June* compilation *From Torture to Conscience*, paints a bleak picture of children abandoned beneath a blood-red sky, as marching feet trample fields of wildflowers before their eyes, and saves this part of *Play* from the "skip" button.

All in all I have to tip my non-existent hat to Apocalyptic Vision for rescuing **Clair Obscur** from total, well, obscurity. If you dig dark ambient/darkwave and nothing else, go for *Play*; if you like pretty much straight classical with a very melancholy feel, pick up *In Out*. *Rock*, my personal pick of the three, has a little bit of both, and shows the band at the top of their musical form. Com-Four. DA.

C-LEKTOR - Various Artists LP.

Certainly not in line with my personal tastes...a compilation of mostly underground beat-heavy, late '80s dance-floor fare "industrial", peppered with more established acts like (surprise!) **Severed Heads** (what happened to these guys??), **Wumpscut**, **P.A.L.**, and **SALT**. I didn't derive much pleasure from listening to this, and some of it is just plain dreadful (**Psychedelic Headshot**, **Misantronic Congelation**, **Your Mistress**, **Das Kombinat**). But, the couple tracks from the veterans (plus maybe **Nobdrun** and **Stin Scatzen**) proved why they've succeeded and others have not, and at least were listenable and even enjoyable within the context. I can't speak for those who go for this type of material, but suffice to say it ain't my gig. I will say this for it, at least it remains focused, unlike a lot of Ant-Zen comps. Just focused in the wrong direction. Ant-Zen. JM.

CLIMAX GOLDEN TWINS - S/T 3" CD.

Not quite what you'd expect based on the

packaging (which is very nice by the way) and name...which, at least to me, suggests rather bright ambience or light techno of sorts. Rather this is constructed from location recordings and/or samples and a healthy dose of guitar frettings, manipulations, and vocal bytes. Its all rather surreal, sounds mingling amidst each within rather spacious confines, sometimes coming together as a sort of disembodied symphony, but mostly just presented in a mish mash of hard to connect to improvisations, alternating between an intricate quiet and a mildly loud and abrasive chaos. Plenty of nice moments presented within its 20 minute time frame, particularly on track three...a strange ethnic chant and haunting tones suddenly transformed into a staticy, throbbing, wall of sound. At two something minutes however, its frustratingly short. Challenging and often confusing music, there certainly doesn't seem to be any lack of inspiration for these pieces...as to what it all means is up to individual interpretation. Fire Breathing Turtle PO Box 45243, Seattle WA. 98145-0243. JM.

THE COLDONCETURNINGDUST - Gloom 7".

This is the first release from Finland's Demonosound under the 'VoimaKayra: PowerWave Unlimited' sub heading, which for the most part, is their outlet for more experimental, power electronics type material. It's not a remarkable beginning, but a decent enough one for those into low, minimalistic frequencies similar to what you'll find on certain B.D.N. or Lille Roger tracks. The one side is exactly what I just said... a numbing rumble proceeding in a linear fashion ... a

bristling, staticy transmission that eventually rolls off into the distance and onward into oblivion. Were it any longer than the confined time frame of a 7" and it'd probably be rather boring, but as it stands, it's short and palatable. The other side is more active, with a slow, repetitive tribal rhythm succumbing to intrusions of obscured swirls of 'radio noise'. There's a melody in there somewhere, but trying to decipher it is futile. This isn't an overly exciting piece of work, but it's at least got me curious to see what future endeavors will have to offer. Comes in an A4 sized booklet and on milky white vinyl. Demonosound. JM.

CON-DOM - Retribution 7".

This is what I wish **Con-Dom** sounded like more often...not so monotone and one dimensional, but driving and slightly rhythmic, evolving and changing without losing its assertiveness or rabid bite. Credit is given to **Richard Ramirez** (for selected source material), **Militia** (for the rhythm and rhyme of vengeance) and **Club Moral** (for destructive vocal inspiration), which probably explains the increase in exertive activity ...though their exact contributions, as you can see, are slightly ambiguous. All in all, its damn potent stuff... combative, treated vocals momentarily paralyze, while the assaultive nature of the electronics circle, then come in for the kill. An effective study in loathing. Ant-Zen. JM.

CON-DOM - All in Good Faith CD.

A re-release and re-mastering of the *All in Good Faith* cassette plus some obscure and/or hard to find **Con-Dom** material and one of the most

thought **Con-Dom** was unflinching, adamant, and relentless before, I can tell you now, you ain't seen nothing yet! Approach cautiously. Functional/Tesco. JM.

CON-DOM - Righteousness 7".

I like the latest *All in Good Faith* CD, but **Con-Dom**'s real potential seems to be coming out in the series of seven seven inches he's been (or will be) doing for various labels (Self Abuse, Ant-Zen, L.O.K.I., Slaughter etc). On this, the third "sermon", he again incorporates rhythm, much like he did for the seven inch on Ant-Zen. It's a rather militaristic style of percussion similar to what **Militia** or **Allerseelen** are currently employing...medium pitched and energetically pounding and fused with the trademark vocals of it's perpetrator. Nothing spectacular, but it's nice to see some variation coming out of the **Con-Dom** camp for once. Side A's "The Casting of Stones" is more traditional **Con-Dom** power electronics, though for this track he seems to have upped the aggression and ferociousness to a level more intense than ever before. It's noisy even for **Con-Dom**, but as vehement and as threatening as anything you're likely to hear from him and sure to please devotees. Pylon UK. JM.

TONY CONRAD - Slapping Pythagoras CD.

Tony Conrad returns with his first studio recordings since 1972's *Outside the Dream Syndicate*, and much like that LP, this finds him immersed in thick sheets of metallic string-drone with minimal drum accompaniment (no drummer is listed in the credits, however). Some guest work is provided by **Jim O'Rourke** and **David Grubbs** (both of *Gastr del Sol*), although its tough to tell just who is doing what since all the instruments blend together into a wall of sound. On a whole, this album is quite comparable to the releases of Holland's Het Appolohuis label (who specialize in this type of thing). If you know and like that sound, I'd have to recommend this. Table of the Elements, PO Box 5524, Atlanta GA. 30307. JS.

CONTAGIOUS ORGASM /BAD SECTOR - Vacuum Pulse CS.

This collaborative tape between **Contagious Orgasm** and **Bad Sector** contains great work by both artists that complement each other very well. Side 1 is a work from **Contagious Orgasm** entitled "Contagious Sector" that is mixed by **Bad Sector**'s Massimo Magrini. It's a long track made of various dark and atmospheric drones, whirring noise loops, and treated voices and sounds that flow through various moods from it's building start to intense closure. Side 2 features "Bad Orgasm" as mixed by **Contagious Orgasm**'s Hiroshi Hashimoto, and like the track on side 1, this **Bad Sector** track builds and escalates into a feverish, highly active, and climatic ending. A definite treat for fans of both artists. Old Europa Cafe. BC.

CONTRASTATE - A Thousand Badgers in Labour CD/Throwing Out the Baby With the Bathwater CD.

Two CDs, one new, the other a re-release of the now deleted second LP, that showcase the brilliance that is **Contrastate**. *A Thousand Badgers in Labour* reveals what I already knew...that they were great from the beginning

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uncompromising and unrelenting attacks on organized religion ever to be thrust upon the free world. This is focused, very raw, and hard-core shit, not for the uninitiated, politically correct or squeamish and most of all, not for the religiously faithful! Sampled vocal and media "fragments typically start things off but their hopeful, good intentioned message is quickly buried under a dizzying attack of overloaded, squirming electronic frequencies and obscured, processed vocal screams. Let you've been mis-interpreting **Con-Dom** all these years, the lyrics to each of the thirteen songs are presented in the booklet with accompanying photos. If you

while *Throwing out the Baby* shows that they're only getting better. You'll be hard pressed to find CDs that display the dark depths of human emotion that either of these do and to play them back to back is to find oneself literally drained. From the delicate, nine minute introductory drone of "Midnight in this Century" to the final haunting moments of "Altering the Circumstances of Human Life", *Throwing* is a consciousness expanding experience. Lyrics are poignant and profound, delivered spokenly in a steady, soft-yet-confident manner, the music a seamless sequence of beautiful, dark, atmospheres and mesmerizing patterns. Unquestionably ranks as one of 1995s finest recordings...if not the finest. For *A Thousand Badgers in Labour*, we travel back to recordings originally done in 1990 and released on vinyl. The newly mastered *Badgers* (plus one additional track recorded during the same session) lacks some of the scope or clarity of its more current brethren, but it remains an outstanding release that holds up to the sands of time remarkably well. Spacious drone textures softly swell, then subside into a hazy dream state, vocals and acoustic melodies intricately woven into the fabrics of madness. In the 15 minute "A Thousand Badgers in Labour (Part 2)", the listener becomes lost in a labyrinth of surreal, unsettling sounds... voices emerge out of the mist, fiendish laughter and echoey noises tug at the threads of sanity that hold you together. This is a soundtrack to a day dream gone deliriously awry, and one can't help but relish in the disorienting effect. *Contrastate* are truly without comparison and remain masters of their trade. Black Rose Recordings. JM.

CONTROLLED BLEEDING - Dub Songs From A Shallow Grave CD.

Don't know what's happened to *Controlled Bleeding* over the years, but it seems to me someone needs to give 'em a swift kick in the ass, get those balls to drop down. For now, they seem firmly entrenched somewhere up in the stomach cavity, or just stuffed into some skin-tight pants. This collection of slow dub songs, while texturally beautiful and overall well crafted, shows C.B. in one of their wimpiest forms yet, as Papa's monotone chant like vocals (read godawful) overshadow some otherwise intricately woven and free flowing dubby atmospheres. To their credit, and this we haven't seen from C.B. in some years, it remains stylistically focused throughout its entirety. Now, if Papa could just learn when to keep his mouth shut we'd be all set. A nice try, but if I have to listen to ambient-dub, I'd much rather it come from M.J. Harris. Dossier - available in the US from Com-Four. JM.

COSMONAUTS HAIL SATAN - Bizarre and Torturous Rituals of the Primitive World 7".

Inept bastard that I am, I thought this was a really cool 7" of super sludgy rock until I discovered I was playing it at the wrong speed. As it stands, its still pretty cool, just not as cool. Even at the recommended speed (45rpm) it remains rather sludgy...Side A features a slow, metric beat with a dirgey bass (is it me or does it resemble the beginning chord to "Iron Man"?) and out of tune, feedbacky guitar accompaniment. Things start off with a twisted "rock" sensibility, but eventually dissolve into

something much more non-melodic and experimental. A hideous mutation of its former self...melting and dissolving into something totally unrecognizable. Did I just call this rock? And whats that voice saying anyway?? Flip it over for even stranger happenings. There's that voice again..."I've got to get out of here...what do they want from me? When will this nightmare end?" it pleads. Funny, but that's the very same question I was just posing to myself. Secret Devil Records -- available from Fourth Dimension. JM.

CRAWL UNIT - Vs. Silence CD.

Having only previously heard *Crawl Unit's* disjointed, collaged style ambient-musique-concrete on *Aftermusic*, I was somewhat hesitant ordering this new release, despite it being touted by the label as "deep sounds reminiscent of Thomas Koner or Lustmord." Luckily, my doubts were eroded very quickly, as wave after wave of monochromatic feedback drone washed over me. Mix one part *Lustmord*, two parts *Arcane Device*, and a sprinkle of *Koner*, and you have 'Vs. Silence'. Created as part of an art installation, this CD has the understated charm of the three aforementioned artists, but with the benefit of being new and different, and therefore much more listenable. Using a sound which I can only identify as a type of sustained feedback undergoing various mutations, *Crawl Unit* have succeeded in producing a CD of high quality minimal ambience, packaged in an appropriately minimal cardboard folder. Povertech/Manifold. BL.

DAGDA MOR - This Sun For Europe mCD.

I can't help but come away disappointed with this release. Based on past endeavors I was really expecting a great deal more. I've listened to it alot too in hopes that it would grow on me, but initial impressions became nothing if more solidified. I've also been trying to figure out exactly what it is I don't like about this and haven't been able to come up with a satisfying answer, yet. It's not that it's a bad release, it just doesn't live up to the high standards I put on *Dagda Mor*. Of the four tracks offered (not including the 20 second unlisted track), only the wind swept atmospheres of the first track manages to exude similar feelings of complete desolation and buried aggression as displayed on the *Heriot/Stern Des Nordens* cassette. Subsequent tracks -- "Dresden", and "A Saxon Flame" are decent enough death-industrial, but lack real emotion and power, and ultimately come off sounding like left-overs from the *Heriot* cassette. The final track "Wir Tragen das Leben", with its overtly simple piano plunks and whiney drone, is incredibly out of place and I'm amazed that *Dagda Mor* would think of even including it. Haven't given up given up hope, but a return to form is needed for my interest to continue. L.O.K.I Foundation. JM.

DEAD BODY LOVE - Audiocide '95.

The packaging alone is great. The cassette is wrapped in wire, and is contained along with an insert sheet in a black folded plastic bag surely good for spare body parts. The release title is displayed on the bag by means of a fluorescent colored "dead" girly shot label that is stuck to it. Sick stuff! The tape contains two tracks.

"Earfucked" is first, which is from start to finish heavy, rolling noise. Imagine the sound a large boulder slowly rolling down a hill would make and you've got the idea. "Crash Program 1" uses noise to create a more percussion/rhythm oriented track, and flows from extreme noise to some quieter periods that work quite nicely. Interesting stuff from this side project of *Drift*. Slaughter. BC.

DE FABRIEK/TELEPHERIQUE - P.W.Z. CD.

A strange collaboration thematically centered around "highway traffic" (you'd never know it though), that brings together the corrosive, mechanical whirrings of *De Fabriek* with the more manipulative, moody techniques of *Telepherique*. I think. I'm not all that familiar with the latter, so its difficult to pin point the exact contributions made. At any rate, the meeting of these two minds originally took place some ways back in the form on a much sought after LP, which supposedly was sold out in a matter of days (!). Now rereleased on CD courtesy of Apocalyptic Vision (Com-Four in the US), its a rather energetic and active piece of recorded surreality, crossfading between harsh rhythmic industrial (for which *De Fabriek* made their name), glowing foreign digital soundscapes, cold metallic resonance's, hazy drones, and bright futuristic bleeps and chimes. Even with such a high degree of varying moods and textures (many times in the course of one song!!), it all comes together extremely well...a testament to both of these bands able capabilities. Sure ain't for everyone (just too strange for that), but definitely worth exploring if you're the adventurous type. Com-Four. JM.

DER SPIRITUS - Ou-A CS.

Atmospheric music that spreads its tendrils far out into the void.. an expedition into the cosmos and more threatening, spherical plains beyond. Unspools itself in hypnotic, slow threads yet flows forth as if being pushed by solar winds. Sounds a little dated at times (like the equipment ain't up to snuff), but otherwise a nice offering on cassette. Has Drone Records discovered these guys? Exprel c/o Cyril Adam, 63 Quai Boissy D'Anglas, 78380 Bougival France. JM.

DEUTSCH NEPAL - Environment 7" Pic Disc.

Deutsch Nepal's first foray into the vinyl format comes courtesy of Ant-Zen and it see's Lina in a strange, uncharacteristically coarse and somewhat unrefined mode. The sounds are noisier and the production more hollow than what you may be used to be, but generally speaking, *Environment* embraces the same recognizable foundation of loops and driving insistentency as found on previous outings. Of the three tracks, the "Dentist" is the most curious. With a loopy, metallic sounding rhythm galloping underneath, we're repeatedly commanded in a menacing voice to open our mouths, wide! It reminds me of the chilling scene with Dustin Hoffman and Lawrence Olivier in the "Marathon Man" and every time I listen to it I have images of that running through my head. Perhaps the inspiration for it came from a particularly bad experience with a

drill-happy Swedish orthodontist?? At any rate, it's certainly a good incentive to floss and brush daily! Side B's "The Habit of Being...." is one of the more minimalistic offerings ever discharged from **Deutsch Nepal**. While the bottom layer itself is rather beefy and deep, the principal components are a heart-beat like thumping and a higher pitched, syncopated clanging noise -- not all that dissimilar to a cow-bell I suppose. Pressed onto thick, industrial strength vinyl, *Environment* remains a must for collectors and fans alike. Take note though, with only 542 copies made this has already seen the marketplace and promptly disappeared. Catch it if you can! Ant-Zen. JM.

DEUTSCH NEPAL - The Very Top of Lina Baby Doll LP.

Chances are slim that if you weren't at the Nevers Festival, or you didn't have a friend that went, this specially recorded, limited edition LP from **Deutsch Nepal** will have passed you by. As the date of the festival approached, I myself turned to acts of desperation, practically begging any and all attending comrades to snag me a copy (or copies), no matter the cost. Obviously, one did (for which I am eternally grateful) and I am can now rest in peace knowing I am one of a select hundred to own *The Very Top of Lina Baby Doll*. Was it worth all the trouble you might ask? Not really, but if you're a record collecting peckerhead like myself, you hate to miss out on things like this, and listening to it becomes rather secondary to simply being able to say you have it. As **Poison Idea** once said, record collectors are pretentious assholes, and it's a tag I'll admit to and wear with little shame. So, not to rub it in, but what

exactly are you missing by not having this? Well, you'll probably be happy to hear, not a whole lot. The cover itself is god awful ugly, with what I'm assuming is Lina himself done up in drag, microphone in hand, and looking like something out of a John Water's film. Very strange. Musically, the whole thing seems rather hurried and thrown together and had I not known it was **Deutsch Nepal**, chances are I'd have never guessed by listening to it. The production seems thin and hollow and the music, in general, overly cold and mechanical, with none of the satisfying solidness and/or dark heaviness as found in previous efforts. There's 7 tracks in total, of which only the droney, deep space atmospheres of "Brown Apocalypse", the desolate, Lustmordian ambience of "The Glossy Funeral", and the final, frantic (noisy) moments of "Amphibia" are remotely memorable. The rest is either too repetitive, minimalistic, or just plain un-interesting ... certainly not terms I'd typically be applying to **Deutsch Nepal**. Disappointing, most definitely, but even with that being the case, I'm still happy to have it, pretentious record collecting asshole that I am. From what I understand, some copies *are* still left over from the festival and may possibly be had from either Noise Museum in France, or try Psychedelic Pig over here in the US. Noise Museum. JM.

DISCIPLINE - The Tyranny of Ignorance CS.

Think **In Slaughter Natives** on a lesser scale and you'll get a fairly decent notion of **Discipline**, a relatively new French outfit headed by one Arnaud Clergue...also of Ex

Machina Magazine fame. A bit artificial and programmed at times, but otherwise high caliber, carefully constructed neo-classical that demands attention and submission. Dark orchestrations, clanging militaristic percussion, and cold atmospheres.... all reminiscent of **In Slaughter Natives** (and also **Autopsia** in parts) but without as much theatrical drama or severe magnitude. Its also a bit more aristocratic than **In Slaughter**...more lofty, more rigid and mechanical, even triumphant in parts. Production and presentation wise, it doesn't get much better than this...a vibrant, clean sounding tape housed in a small "video" box with a cool little fold out insert. Well done. Misanthropy Records c/o Arnaud Clergue 1, rue Lacroix, 69003 Lyon France. JM

DISSECTING TABLE - Dead Zone CD.

If **In Slaughter Natives** hailed from Japan, they might sound something like this: noisier, dancier, stronger, and less neo-classic. *Dead Zone* retains all the former glory of past D.T. ejaculations -- that *UPD* funkiness, that *Zigoku* 'horror-theme' cheesiness, that *Between Live and Death* raw aggressiveness - and rolls them up into one delicious spring-roll of carefully constructed, beat-heavy, doomery. Much of the raw aggressiveness gets compressed onto the title track, a pretty goddamn harsh 'solo vocal performance' peppered with almost unnoticeable, utterly smothered, mechanical atmospheres. Basically, Ichiro, backed by a rather minimal feedback mechanism, interprets the process of evisceration from the inside out, repeatedly screaming and howling until the blood congeals and the throat runs dry. In "Slaughter Machine", Mr. Impatient

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commissions Aki (Hundred Lights of Koenji) for some guttural ranting -- although actually distinguishing one throaty growl from the other proves an exercise in futility. First, soothing shipyard atmospheres alternate with violent, if trippy, beats: unsettling groans, growls, and scrap-metal 'ambience' give way to traditional **Dissecting Table** disco stylistics -- ultrafast multi-layered chime-clang, double barreled bass-thumping, faintly-whining knife-sharpeners and hacking cough. Next, subtle vocal gurgles and increasingly distressed opera sopranists are overcome by static electrocution therapy for detoxed alkie enduring their daily grandmaul seizure. Finally, late-night voodoo marshland tourists get sabotaged by percussive tea-kettle avalanche, before returning to the disco-jam. "Brain Wash" is a comparatively uneventful and thoughtful affair, evolving slowly and subtly through quiet, evenly paced bongos and periodic airlock door slamming. Mildly symphonic orchestrations pile onto sinister, agitated gasps, rising then falling abruptly in the wake of an eerie calm. All semblance of melodic content eventually drips away to be replaced by muddy overload; oscillating bleats, shimmering electronic swabs, monstrous growls, and crackling static. Comedy relief accentuates the final offering, a funky funeral march for the diabolically inclined: stop-pause hurl, overlapping pipe organ and string-laden whine, all staggered between bass-hopping segues that build and bulge out in a rip-roaring climax of raging bippity-bop. I was worried for a little while, but there, sure enough, buried beneath all those oppressive layers, Ichiro manages to slip his favorite torturous shriek-sample into the mix. I haven't laughed so hard in years. UPD. JK.

DOCUMENTS 2 - Various Artists CS.

Documents 2, not to be confused with the similarly named Dorobo comp, is a compilation of fragments of all L.O.K.I. Foundation live activities stemming from 1993-1994. And what a compilation it is! But, if you were smart enough to follow my suggestions on **Inade** and **Dagda Mor** from last issue, that's something you'd have already guessed yeah? Well, if not, then *Documents 2* is probably the best introduction to the formidable L.O.K.I. Foundation you could hope for, even

if it is released on the French label **Nuit et Brouillard**. Aside from tracks from the aforementioned two and their live collaboration under the moniker **M.K. U.L.T.R.A.**, others sharing the spotlight include **Wolverine** (now **Predominance**) and **Iron Will**. This is all powerful, doomy death industrial to begin with, but add the raw, live acoustics to it and it becomes overwhelming in intensity and aggression. Forget trying to pick up subtleties, they're all but gone and buried underneath thick, perpetually in motion walls of electronics. Add a slew of samples and the usual commanding vocals and you've got strong armed tactics indeed. Comes in a box with a booklet. **Nuit Et Brouillard. JM.**

DOCUMENT 2 Sine - Various Artists CD.

Dorobo continues to specialize in the exploration of new auditory realms and possibilities. For *Document 2* they've left their native Australia and channeled across waters, landing on the fertile shores of Japan in search of new talent. Keeping with their high standards, I'd say they've done an exceptional job of finding it. **Ryoji Ikeda** starts things off with a study in how effective minimalism (or true isolationism perhaps) can be when its done well. Aside from an intro of cut-up radio sound bites and transmissions, this quickly settles into a hollow deep space emptiness, punctuated ever so slightly with sonar bleeps and a slow, dubbish bass line. Delicate high pitched transitory sounds pierce the ear drum then disappear back into an isolating black-holeish void for the final track. **Ryoji** has a fantastic knack for introducing sounds into the mix so unobtrusively that pieces and movements flow into each other with virtually no detection, that is unless the most careful of concentration is applied. The heart of this disc lies with **Dumb Type**.. unclassifiable ambience offering both beauty and serenity while remaining esoteric enough to be challenging and unique. Looped tones provide the backdrop for delicate piano melodies in "Love/Sex", while the next piece, "Preamble (For Silence)" is more conspicuous as it alternates between resonating drones and an intrusion of light noises. **Yoshio Ojima's** "Postscript (For Silence)" is up next, darkening the mood with some breathy synth atmospheres and lightly piercing tones. "Zeme Partie", taken

from the *Caresse* CD by **Satsuki Shibano** and **Yoshio Ojima**, is a strange bird indeed, fusing a repetitive piano melody with unexpected bursts of noise (Yoshio at work?) flaring up out of nowhere, all played out within a 15 minute time frame. Satsuki ventures out on her own for a rather anti-climatic closure... barely audible ambience with spoken word carrying most of it. On a whole, *Document 2* is an adventurous and often challenging listen, breathing new life into a format that's become far too stale and just plain boring. **Dorobo. JM.**

DRIFT - The Beyond CS.

Aside from a long high pitched tone on one of these tracks (which I personally enjoy, though the general consensus among acquaintances seems to be that its rather annoying), *The Beyond* is an excellent offering of dark ambience sure too appeal, much like their first tape "Exile" did, to fans of **Lull** and those who don a similar cloke. This is more sparse than "Exile" though ... more spacious and minimalistic, but every bit as dark, if not more so. "The Beyond" unravels rather slowly as deep sounds approach from a distant vantage point, tumbling and rolling forward like ominous thunder clouds and casting the entire landscape into shadowy darkness. At times, its almost too minimal, and the hiss of the cassette actually overpowers the music itself ... but subtleties abound and the sounds build with the passing of time. Not ground breaking, but quite a good effort. **Slaughter Productions. JM.**

DRIFT - Upward Flowing Current CS.

The third **Drift** cassette, and the first done outside of **Slaughter Productions**, *Upward Flowing Current* continues essentially where *The Beyond* left off, with 5 long tracks of deep (way deep actually), dark, and desolate ambience. This is even heavier than previous cassettes though, and the smothering clouds of sound come rolling in like a slow moving avalanche. If dark ambient can be 'crushing', then this most certainly is. There are no higher pitched tones or hidden melodies to speak of, no escalation to an intense climax either, just flowing atmospheres leading a path straight into the heart of your most fearful of nightmares. Only side two's "Wreck" offers the stability of a lurching, **Scorn**-like rhythm over it's cold, hazy drone and respectively bright loop, but the sense of claustrophobic dread that it exudes is immeasurable. **Drift** is getting nothing but better with each passing release, and is quickly proving himself a major contender among the already swollen ranks of dark ambient artists. Less Than Zero c/o Gabriele Giuliani, P.zza A. Moro, 7-57025 Piombino (LI), Italy. **JM.**

DRIFT - Black Line CD.

The debut CD from **Drift** offers three (four kind of, as the last track is put into two parts) long tracks of ambience so cold, deep and conducive to claustrophobia, it's akin to being trapped in a submarine as it descends far beyond the depths it's allowed. Pipes and metal slowly bend and creak from the pressure of it all, and the sounds they emit echo and rumble ominously throughout the cavernous hull. The point at which the ship collapses back onto itself is dangerously near, and it is here where **Drift**

This is an ad from Staalplaat - time flies. As usual. A lot of new stuff is out now, and a lot is in preparation. Out soon (probably by the time you read this):
Le Forbici Di Manitu - Trivolgue, complete with cardboard game (This is Vittore Baroni's new project). Then there is Charlemagne Palestine's legendary 1974 double LP on CD. This is called 'Four Manifestations'. Founding father of minimal music. Forthcoming also our latest find: Internal Fusion, the french answer to Muslimgauze and Rapoon, with a gothic edge. Kingdom Scum slaughter the church on their new CD 'God Eat God'. Unknown, but hopefully loved by many are Cèremonial Silence and Martusciello, both have their first CD on Korm Plastics
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chooses to compose. Only into the third track ("Candlelight Dub/Dead Things") are we offered relief, when amidst a swirl of **Zoviet France**-like hallucinations, **Drift** breaks form and kicks in some seriously low, wall shaking dub rhythms. Dark ambient purists will be glad to know it's relatively short lived (though it's so crushingly heavy that I can't see how anyone cannot like it), and the CD comfortably slips back into the 'mind numbing atmosphere' mode to close things out. Maybe not the most original recording you're likely to hear (as is the nature of **Drift**) but an auspicious debut none the less. Katyn. JM.

EINLEITUNGSZEIT - die Menschzerstörung CS.

If you're a fan of power electronics this unnerving cassette will have you pinching yourself. No, you're not asleep and this is not a dream, this is pure fucking ecstasy and its in your tape deck! I don't know what happened in a small town in Slovakia to spawn its creation, but whatever it was we could use some of it on this side of the Atlantic! Take the tortured mechanical elements of **MZ.412**, the sado-digitalized terror of vintage **Sigillum S**, and the gritty violent aggression of **Genocide Organ**, and combine it with a huge portion of maniacal originality and you'll begin to get an idea of **Einleitungszeit**. But, even with that in mind, its almost impossible to prepare for the chaotic brutality of this release... especially at high volumes! As the machines collide, annihilate, and pulverize, metallic percussion drives nails into your spine with the grace of a sledgehammer. Even as you lay paralyzed and helpless, treated vocals scream an endless stream of commands. Tons of shifting layers and areas explored here and you'll never once get bored...just play it loud and prepare for total sensory overload! Sheesh, I don't think I've ever used that many exclamation points in one review before. Crewzine. JM.

ELEND - Les Tenebres du Dehors CD.

Outright beautiful and deluxe packaging houses what initially appears to be some gothic inspired metal, but in reality, is nothing even close. **Elend** is a three piece French outfit who create elaborate and entirely orchestral music of great beauty and strength....kind of like what I had imagined **Blood Axis** was going to sound like before I heard *The Gospel of Inhumanity* (ha!). Indeed, the only thing saving this from being completely symphonic in the traditional sense, is the haunting, chorus of soprano voices that angelically soar and rise above the stirring, frantic violins, the mournful wood wind instrumentation, and the indecipherable yells and growls of the two male members. Despite what you may think, the pairing of vocal styles works surprisingly well, with the agonizing male screams heightening the already suspenseful atmosphere to a frenzied, over the top level and the clear, ring of the female counterparts sounding like Valkyries seductively beckoning from the shore. **Elend** work on a hugely dramatic scale (Biblical is probably a more fitting description) that surpasses even the most theatrical moments of **In Slaughter** or **Shinjuku Thief**, and while it's not an all together doomy release, it is downright dark and romantically tragic, not to mention

extremely well done. The audience it seeks may be limited in the context of this magazine, but I urge those with a penchant for such fare to act accordingly. Holy Records. JM.

ENDLESS 2 - Various Artists CD.

I've grown weary of compilation CDs as of late...there's just too darn many of the suckers, most with nothing new to offer and void of much purpose. But, then, one comes along like **Endless 2** (following the excellent **Endless 1** naturally) and my faith is renewed. **Manifold** plays it relatively safe with this release, choosing to stick to established names within the dark ambient/isolationist genres, instead of peppering it with lesser known artists as done on **Endless 1**. No matter though, you're probably better off that way. The first half of this release is what works best... the weighty, glacial drifts of **Thomas Koner** (know one does this stuff better) starting things off on a nice note, only to be sucked into the swirling, spacey void that is **Voice of Eye**. Their submission is among the best I've heard from them too...soaring, expanding, transcendental, and all encompassing... closest in style to what you'll find on the faultless *Transmigration*. One of the major flaws with comps is often the time (ie artistic) restrictions put on artists, but **Manifold** seems to have given free reign here...as witnessed in the twelve minute offering from **Steve Roach** and the closing eighteen minute (!) "Sunspot Cycle" from **Robert Rich**. Both take advantage of this time allotment too with towering works of mind expanding atmospheres guaranteed to send you to places typically achieved by the ingestion of some illegal substance. Somewhere between the two things start to go a little array, as edgy offerings from both **Final** and (particularly) **Null** remind us that there is ugliness in this world and that even the safe recesses of the mind are not immune to rather nasty intrusions from time to time. Most forgettable is a collaborative effort between **Nicky Skopelitis** and **Bill Laswell**, but it's "mundaneness" is temporarily forgotten in lew of an uncharacteristically strong piece of glassy ambience from **Controlled Bleeding**. Well, it's strong for the first 5 minutes I should say...after that a flowery dub beat kicks in to ruin any favorable impressions I may have garnered. A quick pressing of the "skip" button remedied the situation and made way for some earth shattering tribal percussion from **Mandible Chatter**. Maybe a bit out of place here, but a rather intense piece all the same. A strong comp overall, but kind of like having really



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sturdy bookends but not enough good books to put between them. **Manifold**. JM.

ENDURA - Dreams of Dark Waters CD.

Of all the material I've heard from **Endura** (which includes cassettes of upcoming material -- one of which should be out soon on Red Stream), *Dreams of Dark Waters* is probably my least favorite....but that's saying more for the strength of their new material rather than the weakness of this, which isn't very at all. Previously known as **Abraxas**, parts of this CD are taken from a cassette they released several years back entitled "Hexe". Which pieces I'm not sure, as I don't have the cassette and its not noted on the liner notes. Anyways, its a solid piece of work... dark, ritualistic and unabashedly inspired by Lovecraftian lore. Certain pieces bear a strong resemblance to **Mortiis** with their slow, rather lofty and formal synthesized orchestrations (though **Endura** was doing this long before **Mortiis** had even surfaced as a solo performer), while others are considerably more menacing....the evocation of dark underworld spirits through pagan chants, mystical shadowy atmospheres, or ceremonial percussion. I like this CD, a lot, but perhaps I'm a bit spoiled by knowing what future releases have to offer. Suffice to say, pick this up in the meantime, just be sure to keep one eye open for what's to come. *I wrote this six months ago and as you can see, many of the releases hinted at have begun to surface...keep reading! Nature and Art. JM

ENDURA - The Dark Is Light Enough CD.

Much like **Final**, **Endura**'s a band that remained quiet for a fair amount of time, then suddenly rose from the ashes with a slew of new and upcoming releases. They're not quite as productive as it may appear on the outside (though they are busy, no question about it), as both the **Liber Leviathan** CD (just released and not reviewed this issue) and *The Dark Is Light Enough* have been recorded for some time, it just took awhile for them to find homes at their

respective labels. So, where to start in all this is a logical question, as three releases coming essentially at the same time can understandably be a bit confusing and overwhelming. Up to you naturally, but going by personal preference, I'd say start with *Black Eden*, then proceed with the *Dark is Light Enough*, then move onto *Liber Leviathan*. While there's a definitive *Endura* sound present in each release, what's nice is that all three offer completely different styles, and yet still manage to complement each other wonderfully. Whereas *Black Eden* is a very sinister and dark, ritual based recording, *The Dark Is Light Enough* captures some of those same elements and expands on them and fleshes them out into more structured compositions, with even more of a focus on the majestic and ominous orchestrations as previously touched on in *Dreams of Dark Waters* (and portions of *Black Eden* for that matter). On the gothically bent "Nevers Gift", said orchestrations are beautifully somber and emotive, and accompanied by a gorgeous, *Coil*-like guitar melody and monotone spoken/sung vocals. It's one of the discs finer moments, and you'll find yourself being swept away by it's flowing symphonic currents, only to be swiftly deposited into the ritualistic fire-circle of "Listen to Wolves", where rousing, tribal percussion pays homage to shadowy underworlds, and deep, vocal growls evoke the threatening presence of some Lovecraftian monstrosity. This mood continues into "Ubbo-Sathla", "He Knows The Gate", and the very *Jorge Reyes*-like "Nu Silence Rite", as *Endura* ventures into some of their most foreboding material yet, with darker than the devil's spit vocal conjuration's, black-ambient spell castings, and thick atmospheric horror. The four songs placed one after another make for a rather suffocating passage of music, and we're finally given space to breathe in the soft, dream like atmospheres of "In the Sea My Lord Lieth", and the beautiful and moving, but very gothic, "When I Was Dead". A superb release in general, but especially for those who feel that the latest CMI releases have been lacking that certain something. Highly recommended. Allegoria Records/Ar-Goat Distribution. JM.

ENDURA - Black Eden CD.

Endura have released an amazing work of minimal dark ambient that's similar to, but actually better than most of the stuff that's been released by Cold Meat Industry in the past couple of years. *Endura* don't bother with the silly corpse paint either, they just let loose with very intense, rich sounding tones of satanic induced spheres of spirituality, adrift through the never ending rituals in fields of an eternally beautiful damnation. Because of the perfect production, the dominant keyboard tones have an amazing low end sound strong enough to rattle the speaker lining in my headphones. There are also nice touches of goth overtones mixed in with orchestra loops, used in ways which make their album very diverse. The third track called "The Devil Stars Burn Cold" have minimal vocals with an assertive yet ominous speaking manner, sounding almost like Michael Gira of the *Swans* singing for a more morbid version of *In the Nursery* or *Dead Can Dance*. "When God Was A Snake" gets into a more dark ethnic groove with tribal Middle Eastern

percussion set to swirling ambience and ghostly indecipherable spirit voices, the type of music that can only be rivaled by the likes of *Muslimgauze*. "The Sun No Longer Sets Me Free" is completely dominated by chanting voices that don't work as well as the minimal vocal oriented compositions. Not that it's bad I just think they mixed one of the voices a little lower, the one that goes into a series of Middle Age influenced "ho-ho-hoo"-ing. It's a little too loud for comfort, and the overall effect reminds me of early to mid era *Test Dept.*, only not as annoying. But, other than that, this is a high quality work of orchestrated coldness within vast plains of eternal sacrifice. A sweet plague of underworld enchantment within a spiritual confinement that will overcome your mind and your soul, emerging you with cascades of darkness with glimmers of beauty through a non-existent hope, because strange trees still grow on the other side of Eden. Red Stream. NE.

ENTEN HITTI - Giant Clowns of the Solar World CD.

Using what seems like as many different acoustic and electronic instruments as there are shells on the beach, and as many different styles and moods of music as there are colors of shells, the Italian group *Enten Hitti* paints gorgeous visions in sound on this album. These visions (or sonatas, as the group labels them) all inhabit the broad, ethereal-ambient realm, but roam widely in their specifics, from *Tangerine Dream*-ish electronics to minimalistic acoustical classical pieces to avant-garde experimental to tribal to gothic/dark ambient. The mournful keyboards, angelic female vocals, and warm oboe, harp, and acoustic guitar and bass of "The Vertical Sea" create a melancholy vision of endless sheets of rain cascading outside a window, while the driven percussion repeats the rhythm of someone pacing back and forth across the floor as drops tap incessantly at the panes. Behind the absinthe-soaked wooden bars of "Artaud's Aviary" all manner of incredible percussions (xylophone, wood chimes, shells, kalimba) echo the clatter of many tiny bird feet on perches, while the siren-like female vocals and Tibetan bells speak in many tongues for the imprisoned avians. And the closing track spray-paints "Silent Graffiti" across the night sky; colored swirls and blinking lights flash in time with the inter-galactic electronic keyboards and chill interstellar violin. Although "Requiem Budda" gets a bit unfocused and noodling at times, there really aren't any bad tracks among the eight included here, and very few unpleasant moments among the total 47. Worthy of note for any fans of ethereal ambient; *Love is Colder Than Death* isn't a bad comparison, but *Enten Hitti* have a much greater variety in their instrumentation, and tend more towards classical/experimental than gothic/industrial like *LICITD*. Aqua/Amplesus -- available from Projekt. DA.

ENTERTAINMENT THROUGH PAIN: A TRIBUTE TO THROBBING GRISTLE - Various Artists CD.

Merzbow, *Emil Beaulieu*, *Phlegm*, *7000 Dying Rats*, *Skullflower*, and others get together to fuck the already rotting and stinky corpse of *Gristle*. Did anyone other than

Grae-Com, covering "20 Jazz Funk Greats" or *Paul Lemo's*, covering "AB/7A", take this seriously??? So bloody awful it could effectively be used as a means of torture. RRR. JM.

EROSORE - Invisible Sheath Urinal CS.

A weighty 20 minute slice of atmospheric noise to chew on from the good folks over at Clotted Meat Portioning, *Erosore* transforms the normally gentle sounds of a bass, a guitar, and drums (where are they I might wonder???) into a dynamic swirl of bottom heavy sound. The "drip side" is the weaker of the two...mostly sustained, scraping feedback ringing out over deeply distorted bass growls. It's not bad, but its abundance of high pitched tones places it a bit too high on the annoyance scale for my tastes. "Dry side" however, is much more to my liking...2 meaty tracks of contorted, processed, and fluctuating textures that are too atmospheric to be noise, but too noisy to be atmospheric. Lots of layers and more than a few wrenching climaxes to hold your interest. Time flies when you're having fun, and ten minutes of the stuff just ain't enough. Clotted Meat Portioning. JM.

EXPLORATION ONE - Various Artists CD.

A compilation of electronic extremes that brings together some of the better known artists working in the power electronics field, 11 in total. Can't say its an easy listen for those whose ears aren't already adjusted to this type of fare, but it remains a mandatory purchase for the already converted and addicted, like myself. Not entirely without its weak points, *Intrinsic Action* come off sounding like their typical silly selves in a failed attempt to shock with contrived sado lyrics and numbing frazzled electronics. No wonder they packed it in. Subversive individuals can otherwise indulge themselves in some deviant listening from *Brighter Death Now* (freezing dark minimalism), *Orphx* (machine-like nihilism), *Anenzephalia* (surprisingly enough the best track on heresomewhat loopy, but with a distinct nightmarish quality and a sturdy foundation), and *Genocide Organ* (heavy pulsations and terrorizing flanged vocals -- incredibly intense shit). Other worthy inclusions come from *Deutsch Nepal*, *Sshe Retina Stimulants*, *Sigillum S*, *MSBR*, and *Iugula Thor*. Where's *The Grey Wolves*? Body and Blood Exploration JM.

EXTERIOR MIRROR - Hupp CD.

The release of *Hupp* marks the birth of Praxis Dr. Bearmann's promising sub-label Katyn Records (dedicated to more ambient and atmospheric type music). It's also the first full length release for *Exterior Mirror*, whose sole member Claude Willey thankfully now seems content to pursue a career in ambient music as opposed to re-creating the beat heavy electro-industrial antics of his former group, *Batz Without Flesh*. In general, *Hupp* is a satisfying listen, comprised mainly of loops intertwined with cold, almost metallic and digital sounding atmospheres, with a distinct spacey and futuristic underlying feel to it. There's a definite sense of progression in each track, but a general lack of climaxes or high and lows (with the exception of probably 3

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tracks, most noteworthy being the somewhat symphonic "Coolant")... more a presentation and layering of evolving frequencies and rather pure and clean tones that together seem to probe the ear drums with a perceptible insistency. You'll find some elements of **Zoviet France** as well as **Dead Voices on Air** (not coincidentally Mark Spybey is the one credited with the artwork) incorporated within this CD, particularly in the superb title track, but **Exterior Mirror** is an entirely electronic entity and lacks much of the warmer, organic feel of those two outfits. And indeed, the main shortcoming of what is otherwise a good CD, is it's deficiency of any sort of emotion or passion.... there's never the feeling that we've actively connected with the artist or music, just one of being passively displaced. Katyn. JM.

FETISCH PARK - Ego Ex Nihil CD.

I haven't heard **Fetisch Park's** two previous CDs, but supposedly they're much darker and more industrial than **Ego Ex Nihil** is. Consequently, some of their older fan base may lose interest, but for a neophyte like myself, I found it strikingly calm and quite beautiful. As the liner notes detail, **Ego Ex Nihil** (roughly translated from latin and meaning I out of nothing), was designed to be played for unborn babies to invoke some sort of internal stimulus. The recordings were then played back upon the birth of the child, and the result, as anticipated, was a visible reaction of familiarity, with relaxation being the most common effect. Crystal clear tones, resonant chimes and bright jingles comprise the majority of this disc, and while moving at a slow, uneventful pace, seem to flow infinitely off into the void, radiating an aura of childlike fascination and pure, untainted innocence. A bit drawn out by discs end, but overall enrapturing

and life affirming music that almost makes me want to procreate just to test it out for myself! Staalplaat. JM.

FINAL - Two CD.

For almost three years listeners have subsisted on one *One* disc, a couple of compilation appearances and a piddlin' 7". Well, now the wait is over and **Godflesh's** Justin Broadrick, with side-project **Final**, plumbs even deeper via psychic frequency than it's predecessor. *Two* exploits the tragic, drawn out chords that were only partially touched on in the first disc with nine, unnamed tracks, represented in the liner notes by different typewriter characters like parentheses and commas....sounds trite, but makes sense once you hear the music. Why screw up the autonomous passion with labels? And instead of only strict guitar drone and such, we hear the concrete solitude of a lone piano, or occasionally a cello or some other unexpected tool. The nine tracks in *Two* stretch out and drone almost melodically, with simple tonal changes evoking the sort of emotion found in things like Eno's *Apollo* album or early **Coil**. But **Final**, particularly within the body of *Two*, owes less to the old-school than to the obvious later pioneers like **Thomas Koner** or **Jim O'Rourke**, at least in method if not sound. In the end, **Final** owes nothing to no-one and it's obvious in *Two* because it never does what one expects: a sound ends in a different place, a drone goes down a notch instead of up, the atmosphere shifts without warning, and nothing is ever predictable for long. Semantics aside, *Two* is simply an excellent dark ambient ride -- with the sort of thoughtful crafting that makes it listenable long after you know what's coming next....and completely justifies the following that **Final** has gathered since *One*. I have to admit something... I like the term "isolationist" (there, I've said it) and I would probably use it more often if it wouldn't get me kicked out of the "club". In any event, if you can understand this term, then I will stick my neck out even further and say that **Final's** *Two* is probably one of the best isolationist releases in '96, a sure bet for anyone who has thirsts for the work of **Lull**, **Labradford**, **Yen Pox** and numerous other dark, droning, experimentalists. Sentrax. VH.

FINAL - Solaris CD EP.

Feast or famine should be the **Final** motto, for on top of this release there is rumored to be a 7" and yet another full length, all coming out in '96. But who's complaining? *Solaris* is a whopping 35 minutes (longer than some full length discs) of completely new and slightly varied material. Three very long tracks cycle and wait away, almost noisily compared to the *Two* disc -- reminding one of the monolithic violence of "1983-1987 (edits)" track that closed out the *One* disc. Voracious **Final** fans will find this disc a small but satisfying meal, and even novice listeners will get a not-too-shabby introduction to Broadrick's solo project. Comes in a simple, two-color booklet, not a jewel box. Quite nice. Alleysweeper. VH.

FIVE THOUSAND SPIRITS - A Tapestry For Sorcerers CD.

What do you get when **Alio Die**, **Runes Order**, and **R. Serra** collaborate on a CD? Why you get a CD that sounds like a collaboration

between **Alio Die**, **Runes Order**, and **R. Serra**, with perhaps the spirit of **Vidna Obmana** overseeing the operation...a meeting ground for the organic and the digital, the cosmos and the netherworld, the spiritually enlightening and their more mystical, diabolical counterparts. Clusters of percussion, nature samples and various treated sounds populate the serene, brooding, atmospheres, casting it into the shadows while adding welcome further dimensions. For every piece that's compelling (such as the 16 minute "Eskdalemuir", the forlorn and haunting "Lais", or the richly scored and lush "Heat Lunis"...all of which comprise the latter half of this CD), there's one that glides by virtually undetected...sounds that wash over the mind and body only to leave but a slight detectable trace. Instead of being welcomed into this fictional world one is left only with a strange sense of being displaced. All of which brings us to the middle ground...not always the most interesting of places to be. Hic Sunt Leones. JM.

GENOCIDE ORGAN - Mind Control LP.

This limited edition (500 copies) slab must have sold out in record time, because I had one hell of a time tracking it down. After an exhaustive search, that included many a faxes and posts on the internet, I finally stumbled upon it listed in a Relapse ad in *Manifold*. Hey, who says advertising doesn't work? At this point, Relapse may be the only place that still has copies of this available, in which case I suggest you call them before the remaining few are safely stowed away in somebody's collection, appreciating in value with each passing day. Its been almost four years since we've seen a full lengthier out of **Genocide Organ** (Germany's most venomous and controversial band), and they've since decided to take a more subtle approach to their madness. Instead of going immediately for the throat with an all out, vehement noise attack as witnessed on *Save Our Slaves* or *2 Days of Agony*, **Genocide Organ** opts for a slow, surreptitious stalk and then a kill from behind. With its corrosive, volatile atmospheres and pulverizing wet frequencies, this is **Genocide Organ** focused and surging with barely containable vehemence. Both "Burn" and "Saddams Day", with their unsettling, eery drone and slow background "thump", reminded me a hell of a lot of **Throbbing Gristle's** all time classic "Hamburger Lady" and the sick feelings evoked were remarkably familiar (remember when you first heard that song?? Ah, but how the memories came flooding back). Other tracks, like the overwhelmingly powerful "Hate" or the abrasive "The Elders of Zion", bring back the noise in caustic, rolling waves, building on the already high tension with angry samples and terroristic flanged vocals. Probably one of the best examples of pure power electronics you could ever hope to find, **Genocide Organ** has successfully set an untouchable standard for subtle and not-so-subtle intensity. Get it at all costs. Tesco. JM.

LISA GERRARD - The Mirror Pool CD.

Beautifully conceived and masterfully executed, this is one of the best recordings I've heard in a long while -- written and produced by Lisa Gerrard, it also leaves no doubt as to where a

great deal of the talent in **Dead Can Dance** lay. Exquisite, sorrowful, powerful, beautiful...in some ways **The Mirror Pool** harkens back a bit to older DCD material, with real strings and a "gothic" atmosphere. Songs like "Ajhon" and "La Bas" sound like they could have easily come off of *In the Realm of the Dying Sun* or *The Serpent's Egg*, but this goes way beyond that. In fact, some pieces such as "The Rite" (which has to be the best soundtracks for a blackmass I've ever heard) and "Sanvean" (one of the most beautiful songs I've ever heard) show a much greater expression of style emotion than DCD's recordings. There's a delicacy, power, and grace that is rare outside the world of classical music. Many people aren't going to like this because it may sound too much like "classical" music (she even covers a piece by Handel), but that's too bad, because the material on this CD came straight out of someone's soul, something you don't come across too often these days. 4AD. BS.

G*PARK- Geopod CD.

If I filed all my CDs according to genre, **G*Park** would probably be in a corner all by itself. **G* Park**, a creation of Swiss artist Marc Zeier, is truly music that sidesteps convention and formula, sometimes carrying some of the same surreal non-descript qualities as **Randy Greif** works, but ultimately easier to endure, and not quite as perplexing. A specialist at the capturing of found and organic sounds, Zeier transforms them into an enigmatic, dark alchemy that's sometimes spacious and "wide open", other times, claustrophobically closed in and threatening. Resonant tones, gongs, soft whirrings, drones, and a host of other indescribable murky sounds are carefully pieced together, and though they show a general disregard for melody or harmony, there's always the sense that Zeier is in command. He's the one controlling the sounds, not the other way around. Intriguing. Zabriskie Point. JM.

THE GREY WOLVES - Age of Dissent LP.

Only the **Grey Wolves** second full length release, *The Age of Dissent* shows them adopting a somewhat cleaner, more defined and structured (used loosely) sound. With that being said, what's here still seems rather frustratingly muffled and dirgey, detracting from an otherwise extremely potent brand of noisy power electronics. **The Grey Wolves** have always had a very sort-of "wet" sound... low and mid level frequencies that seem to flutter, churn, and curdle, gelatinously "grinding" against each other in an unsettling brew. Loops are present, but not intrusive or overbearing, and they help to add a small sense of melody and stability in an otherwise highly fluctuating and volatile environment. Likewise, flanged vocals have always played a key part in defining **The Grey Wolves** overall sound, and when they appear (not as often as I'd like I might add), they are terrorizing and venomous...an expression of pure hatred and nihilism as only they can do (check out the lurchingly rhythmic and powerful title track for proof of this)! Though not entirely far removed, I like this a good deal more than their last effort for Tesco (the way out of print *Punishment LP*) ... which could partly be due to a shift in tastes, but more than anything, it's just a better

album! Tesco. JM.

THE GREY WOLVES - Catholic Priests Fuck Children LP.

Yikes, what a title! I was going to think of something creative to say about it, but I found myself strangely at a loss for words. **CPFC** is a quick follow-up to Tesco's *Age of Dissent LP*, and it shows the **Grey Wolves** definitely heading in the right direction...the production is cleaner and less muddled than previous outings, and so consequently, the sounds are more defined and ultimately more powerful. They've even gone so far as to incorporate a steady stream of structural elements into their sound... punishing loops, an occasional rhythm or percussive clang, even a buried melody or two. That's not too say that **CPFC** is any less of an assault than previous works, far from it, for all elements of the **Grey Wolves** sound remain firmly intact: flanged terroristic vocals, wet electrode spasms, samples, the palpable sound of circuitry being fried, etc, ...it's just that they've begun to broaden their palette a bit (which I've always thought they needed to do). Be sure not to miss the last track "Deconstruction", as the **Wolves** venture into something classifiably atmospheric, and come off sounding like a more threatening version of **Vromb!** Damn I wish there was more stuff like this out there....I need another fix. Comes in a big, fold out sleeve with lots of things to read and contemplate. Praxis Dr. Bearmann. JM.

HANDS TO - Turn My Hands To CD.

Seems there was a time when I didn't like **Hands To**, but no more (at least for the time being). Whether that means my tastes have changed or **Hands To** has, I'm not all together certain. I think its me though, this sounds pretty similar to what I've heard in the past. *Turn My Hands To* represents a collection of pieces recorded in various cities or locations surrounding from 1982-1991. Comprised mostly of tape manipulations and the aforementioned location recordings, its not always exciting and many of the sounds lack a sense of evolution, but it certainly has its share of moments. **Hands To** remains one of the foremost purveyors of junky soundscapes, and as such the music can be thunderously explosive and unpredictable, and lots of fun if played at extreme volumes, as is recommended (note, its a good idea to check if the neighbors are home before you do this...I've had several complaints already). Though only one continuous track, nothing is ever allowed to become stagnant in the "hands" of **Hands To** ...the sound and textures are in constant motion with massive sheet metal clammerings and creaks bullying their way into more subtle realms of muffled destruction and strange shufflings (like rooting through somebody's tool box). This comes together best at around the 40 minute mark, when the sound becomes a roaring menacing wall of sound...dense, focused and impenetrable. Zabriskie Point. JM.

THE HATERS - Urban Sensitivity CD.

Heard the **Haters**? Then this CD *Urban Sensitivity* (no similarity to the aT cassette of the same name) presents nothing new. Their conceptual familiarity lends itself to steady tones and loops, low level grinding,

stream-lined dynamics, this is a basic continual manifestation of their principle "originality is not important, consistency is". Concepts smitten with artful pretense presents engaging performances, but the end separated from the means makes for nothing else than wallpaper. My concept of consistency breeds complacency, familiarity breeds contempt, so I cannot judge whether their ends justify their means as the only space it occupies is just the inherent frequencies. Those more versed in Haterism can debate further. Commercial Failure. PK

THE HEARING TRUMPET - Collected Stories CS.

A decent enough offering from two dudes who also produce an experimental radio show out of Detroit, which not coincidentally bears the same name as their tape label, Misanthropy. Says here that all sounds were recorded during various live radio mixes. I'm a bit confused by what that means exactly...so I'm assuming that it means the music on the tape is comprised mainly of obscured and processed radio transmissions, though that seems inconceivable based on some of the noises being made. Though sometimes getting quite loud and junky a la *Hands To*, more often than not *The Hearing Trumpet* likes to toy with ambiguous, indefinable refined sounds and noises, all the while showing to be aptly capable of disguising the original source material. There's a wide array of styles that comes out of these experiments, which makes this extremely difficult to categorize and sum up without having to resort to describing the finer points of each and every song...ambient minimalism, static white noise transmissions, warbly drones, echoey hallucinogenic soundscapes where snippets of melodies and ghostly voices drift in and out, outright bizarre oddities, and so on. Nothing comparable immediately springs to

mind, though I could see *Beequeen* or *Kapotte Muziek* coming up with something of a similar nature. Recommended. Misanthropy Tapes, PO Box 23093, Detroit, MI. 48223. JM.

HISS - Alien Bass Soundscapes CD.

The debut CD from this mysterious Australian duo has already begun to create quite a stir, as word has spread rather quickly that what was put onto disc may very well be some of the lowest frequencies ever cast off as music. In fact, according to the bio, "the frequency range spans the audible and the inaudible", but I must ask how including the latter on a CD serves any purpose? Anyway, contrary to what the title may suggest, what's on here was not created via some whacked out bass distortions, but rather derived from, I believe, a purely electronic medium. Now, how they went about getting it down so low is anybody's guess, and what the procedure is, I have no idea. 'Tis some rather suffocating and weighty material though, and listening to is like being trapped just under the surface of the Mississippi river and having a barge repeatedly roll right over head, the throbbing pulsations and dense swirls that comprise the majority of this disc much like the synopated whoosh of monstrously sized, slowly moving propeller. Played at a low volume it's nothing more than minimalistic background ambience/ noise, but notch the volume up just two or three notches and before you know it you'll be picking up pieces of glass from the shattered picture frames that once hung upon the wall. Rumbly, man, rum-bly! But, look beyond it's initial novelty factor and *Alien Bass Soundscapes* is really quite an uneventful listen that fails to stand up to a fair share of go-arounds. Climaxes that one somehow expects in such drawn-out soundscapes either fail to materialize or fall short of their aspirations, and we're left with tracks that go on for too long and without enough variation, despite even the periodic intrusion of a melody filtered in over top. The CD liner notes claim "for full effect it is desirable to listen to this CD on a system with good bass response", so maybe that's what I'm missing in all this? Mmm, probably not. Agrocalm. PO Box 37, Surry Hills 2010 N.S.W. Australia E-mail: jasmine@ebom.com.au. JM.

this world, the initial light and spacey keyboard noises intensifying into cold glassy shards that descend from the skies. And then silence, and a low whispery rumble summons the beginning of the end. I'll say it again, holy shit! I need, no I demand more, more, more! Side B's "Drown-Drone" is a bit lighter in texture and more refined, but it's still impressive as hell...the throbbing hum of a digderidoo setting the stage for fragile wind-chimes and quiet, non-descript sounds. From a label that's always impressive, this ranks in the top three of their releases. With 250 copies produced it's imperative that you act now to get a taste of this brilliance. Drone. JM.

HOMOGENIZED TERRESTRIALS - Transfermented CS.

Phil's definitely getting good...compared to early tapes and experiments, this shows a pronounced evolution and a noticeable honing of skills. Not so much noodling this time around either, and a good bit more serious. Side A features tempoed, peculiar sounds that range from light hearted fare (singular chimes and timbres, liquidous perculations and gurgles, spacey gongs and resonant nuances etc.) to a beefier, dark shade of layered ambience thats bristling with soft fissures and gentle tears. Side B's "Transfermented" comes off sounding a bit like *Arcane Device*. Though not comprised off feedback (I don't think at least), its makes of similar sounding medium to high pitched tones that smoothly dissolve into one another.... very light, whispered and delicate textures, more gaseous than solid matter. Subtle, quiet, but by no means minimalistic, it's the kind of stuff that'll leave your brain wondering why your body suddenly seems to have become detached. As for the rest of the three tracks that make up side B, go to the top of the review and start over. Quite impressive. 6 On The Dot c/o Phillip Klampe, PO Box 313, Peru IL. 61354. JM.

HOMOGENIZED TERRESTRIALS - Victor's Old Noise Generator CS.

Even if H.T. isn't a sound I typically search out, I reserve a soft spot in my heart for their work simply because its always interesting and almost always unique. The best way I can describe it is "well done noodlings". There's not much complexity, and never much layering, simply abstract, surreal, and colorful (entirely electronic I believe) sounds whose normal habitat seems to be in some strange, backwards land. Surely there's some aliens off on some distant universe composing similar music...it may even be topping the charts for all we know! Fun stuff. 6 On The Dot (address above) JM.

LAZLO HORTOBAGYI - Ritual Music of the Formal-Hoot Al-Ganoubi CD.

This Hungarian composer's newest CD, which is his 4th, was released shortly after his fine *Arcadian Collection*, but shows him to be stylistically treading water. His modus-operandi - carefully assembling samples and elements of various world musics to create "representative" works from mythological places - has worn pretty thin recently and this disc suffers from the same heavy-handedness that bastardizes most attempts at this sort of cross-cultural

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Holy shit, where did these guys come from? Take away the analog synth fluttering in the background (not that you'd want to), and the haunting and processed vocal treatment that's left could easily have found its way into something from *Yen Pox* or *Voice of Eye*...and held it's own for that matter! Absolutely incredible, low moans swelling and growing into something totally out of

"fusion" (shuffling house beats, anyone?). Whether this is a temporary slump or part of a larger decline for Lazlo remains to be seen. Erdenklang, In der Habbecke 18, 59889 Eslöhe Germany. JS.

BRANNON HUNGNESS - Virtual Symphony No1: Inaudible Silence CD.

Top notch stuff from Brannon Hungness (**Glenn Branca Ensemble** and **Oblivion Ensemble**)four pieces (or movements if you prefer) that surge forth with restless unease and release, taking their time to build to heightened climaxes, then crashing down into in an exhaustive, uneasy "silence". Over 18 people contributed to this CD in some form or anotherand in that sense it remarkable for its scope and the discipline in which it was performed Brannon exercises sovereign authority over most of these pieces, controlling and conducting the chaos with tight restraint, then suddenly letting go and giving free reign to the musicians. *Virtual Symphony* is a remarkable tapestry of sounds brought forth by a backdrop of keyboard atmospheres (both abstract and conventionally dark ambient), resonating guitar tones (chorused feedback drones a la Branca or delicate composed plucks and fingerings), crashing percussion, and an abundance of "alien" sounds (distant radio voices, staticy transmissions, even a vacuum cleaner). All hurdle onward with adventurous enthusiasm and come together ingeniously under the able talents of Hungness. Extensive and wonderfully written liner notes give further insight. Multi-Mood. JM.

RYOJI IKEDA - Fragments CD.

The first one-third of this CD, pieces recorded between 1985-1995, flies by in a series of fast moving collages...recordings comprised of mostly short-wave radio transmissions but sound bytes, some beats, and some digital noises and static. Its the second and third half, entitled "5 Zones" and "Luxus" respectively, where things really slow down and Fragments begins to show its strength. 3 of the 5 "zones" are the same ones that can be found on the superb Dorobo *Document 2* comp, and they are made all the more intriguing by being sandwiched among it's like-minded brethren. Compared to the short and quick nature of the first nine tracks, these are long-ish (average about 6 minutes) pieces of minimalistic ambience. Subtle yes, but one dimensional, most definitely no. High pitched factory drones, sonar bleeps, delicate piercing tones, and even a slow dub beat are patiently unveiled over the course of the 5 tracks and wonderfully accent the deep space atmospheres throbbing and pulsing underneath. Excellent, and yet, it's still eclipsed by the final 16 minutes ("Luxus 1-3") of enveloping, celestial ambience guaranteed to soothe the restless soul. First he compiles *Statics*, and then gives us this, I'd say the guys on a roll. CCI Recordings. JM.

ILHEUS - Land of Ruins and Mist CS.

Rather deceptively packaged to look like it'd house some third rate goth-rock or black metal band, but in actuality, an impressive debut offering of death-industrial from this one man French outfit. France on the whole, has really been on the ball as of late, and **Ilheus** is among

the cream of the current crop. Strongest in the beginning of the tape, *Land of Ruins* literally roars to life with the protracted title track. A monstrous piece, it's saturated with bellowing, abysmally deep and ominous sounds that rise, swell, and seem to go on forever, coming off as a cross between **Brighter Death Now** and the approaching sounds of some inexplicable, Lovecraftian horror. Simply massive. Almost equally as impressive is the following "A Precious Moment of Agony", with it's doomfully slow percussion, rhythmic palpitations, eery whispers, high pitched howls and moans, and cavernous, despondent atmospheres. By now, the sense of dread is so thick it's practically oppressive! A mournful, **Mortis**-like church organ comprises much of the following two tracks, and while good, they seem to plod along and stray a little bit too far into the gothic spectrum of things for my personal tastes. Or maybe it's just that they pale in comparison to the overwhelming power of the first two tracks? Finally, the closing track "Deify The Plague" brings back some of the sounds of the title piece, only this time it's a slower assault...more subtle and atmospheric, with a heavy bottom layer of frightening ghostly moans, echoing clangs, and what sounds like a small bit of guitar ambience. Further proof that not all dark music has to come from Sweden. **Ilheus** is one to watch, and watch closely. Available for 35FF or \$7.00ppd (worldwide) from **Ilheus** c/o Elie Duflos, 15, Chemin De La Cascade, 73000 Jacob-Bellecombette France. JM.

ILLUSION OF SAFETY - Mort Aux Vaches CD.

The quality of material released so far by the *Mort Aux Vaches* series, this being the third, has truly been outstanding. With releases by both **Merzbow** and **Contrastate** in the works it's a trend I suspect will continue. For this, **IOS** remains mostly in the minimalist ambient realm; two lengthy pieces, the first of which is comprised chiefly of electro-acoustic explorations ... piano plinks, string plucks, and strange muffled sounds that give way to a more disquieting, claustrophobic environment of reverbed clangs and glacial sublevels. Not a sound that's typically equated with **IOS**, but then, I'm not sure there is such a thing. The second piece starts in a similar minimalist fashion, but escalates quickly into a teeming, swarm of hive-like drones before crossfading into hollow field recorded ambience to carry us out. Another reinvention of the **IOS** sound, that while clearly not remarkable, certainly upholds a fine tradition. Staalplaat. JM.

IN BETWEEN NOISE - Humming Endlessly In The Hush CD.

The name of Steve Roden's first CD was *So Delicate and Strangely Made*, but its a title that could just as easily apply to his successful follow-up *Humming Endlessly In The Hush*. Much like that release, *Humming* takes it sound source from an amazing variety of instrumentation, among them a whole host of children's toys ("kooky kombo," a "wonder player", "scottie bagpipes," a music box from Steven's child hood), plus field recordings taken from around the world, African drums, accordions, banjos, homemade thing-a-ma-jigs

etc. none of which are immediately recognizable for what they are. Its the kind of creativity that knows no boundaries, and the fact that Roden makes it work as well as it does accurately reflects his attention to detail and the immense care and thoughtfulness he takes when composing. *Humming* is a thoroughly personal, almost poetic, release that, through the music and extensive liner notes, captures and chronicles portions of the artists life, inspirations, and journeys ("aural snapshots" would perhaps be a fitting description). Like *So Delicate*, *Humming* evolves at an unhurried pace ... airy drones, beautiful foreign voices, exotic percussion, refined timbres, and wonderfully strange and pure tones intricately pieced together and converging under a hazy early morning light. I sincerely hope that this review doesn't get lost in the bowels of this magazine, for *Humming* is probably one of the more unique listening experiences you could ever hope to find and one that truly deserves any and all recognition. New Plastic Music, PO Box 36B16, Los Angeles, CA. 90036-1154. JM.

THE INCAPACITANTS - As Loud As Possible CD.

Not their most brutal presentation ever, but close. Yet another work of genius from the "Undynamic duo". Once again Mikawa and pal put all the rest of noisedom in it's place (one step behind) with over 70 minutes of ultra-intense ear-blowing electronics. This one continues to explore the equal opportunity possibilities of low frequency bass rumbling, tentatively tapped in recent excretions *D.D.D.D.* (Old Europa) and *Ministry of Foolishness* (RRR). Like those bowel movements, high pitched screeching has been dropped a rung or two in order that the speaker-shredding crunchers might have a go. A new respect for crunching is especially apparent in the first track, "Apoptosis", where the crunch assumes an almost percussive bent, swimming in and out of focus with the more traditional 20+kHz whine. Following are a couple veritable mind-nukers, including the aptly titled "Necrosis" and an absolutely superb live recording that retreats a little further into the red zone, enveloped by several layers of high-end shriek. The results are guaranteed to please. More textural than any of their previous work and hell, its the frigging **Incapacitants**, need I say more? Zabriskie Point. JK.

THE INCAPACITANTS - Ministry of Foolishness CD.

Ah, if only a church of noise was an institution; I'd attend every Sunday morning, never mind the previous night of bucolic alcoholic ultra-binge. Those aching bones would scrape up those sandpaper concrete steps to settle in the unforgiving right-angle pews and lift my compressed head to hear the reverent duo of the **Incapacitants** every week. *The Ministry of Foolishness* opens up with three slabs of omnipotent discharge of fire and brimstone that towers and looms before me., larger than life and louder than hell. My level of human insignificance rises with the volume of the truly unrelenting wall of sound, incredibly thick and dense, and virtually impenetrable. It is consistent with the rest of their output, but that



in no way diminishes the absolute crushing power they have over your soul. Like any good sermon, it leaves you cowering in humiliation, begging for repentance, leaving the heretical and the naysayers quivering in their wake. Consider me a believer. Pure/RRRecords. PK.

IN SLAUGHTER NATIVES - Purgate My Stain CD.

To say that Jouni Havukainen (aka **In Slaughter Natives**) is a doomsayer would be an understatement...for him the end will always be more exciting than the beginning, the fate of mankind nothing but a page turned in history looked upon with callous and disdain. *Purgate My Stain* ushers in the approaching millennium with a vision that's frighteningly pessimistic and bleak, for there is no light at the end of the tunnel for Jouni, only darkness...and that's the way he likes it. The music on *Purgate My Stain*, as in past I.S.N. releases, is played in a manner befitting of this prophecy...on a scale so large it's rivaled only by the apocalypse. It's a tad quieter release than previous efforts, but its clearly meant to be his crowning achievement...as perhaps it should be, as Jouni has already proclaimed this to be his last release under the I.S.N. moniker. Massive brass proclamations, rigid militaristic percussion, and condemning orchestral swells show a return to original form, leaving out any and all of the guitar that made *Sacrosanct's Bleed* the disappointing release that it was. Jouni himself orates from the pulpit on a regular basis, spewing venom in a guttural voice (sometimes accompanied by a chorus of the damned) and delivering a message that remains largely indecipherable. Those lucky enough to own a copy of the now deleted *Mort Aux Vaches* CD

(AD#6) may be slightly disappointed to find the first 1/2 hour of that CD can be found here (re-mixed), spread out over four tracks; "Pure...the Suffering," "Purgate My Stain," "Truth Awakening," and "Clean Cathedral". But even with that being the case, the remaining four tracks are so monumental you won't even care. When the day of reckoning does come for us worthless humans, you can go contentedly knowing this is (or was) in your collection, or you can die horribly without it...the choice is yours. Me, I'll be smiling all the way. Staalplaat. JM.

INTERNAL FUSION - Om Vaira Sattva Hum CD.

One of the best of Staalplaat's new acquisitions, **Internal Fusion** should find much appeal among those already keen on C.O.T.A., **The Hybrids**, **O Yuki Conjugate**, or any one of the exotic,

percussion based bands currently on the scene. Yes, similarities can be found to those bands (and more), but that's not to say they're derivative of any one of them. Maybe you've even heard their submissions for the excellent *Le Cenacle* comp cassette on Harmonie? In which case you're already been made aware of the immense talent of this band. Unlike their counterparts, **Internal Fusion** possess a distinct sensuality to their work where, amidst a steady influx of hazy drones, loops, Middle Eastern instrumentation, resonant chimes, cryptic voices, and beautifully dark keyboard atmospheres, the percussion arises...rapturously slow at first, with erotic light touches, then faster, with more passionate fervor as rhythmic layers and/or instrumentation is added and the tempo increased. The absolute highlight among the eight tracks here comes in "Dewa", in which a steady, hand struck drum pattern is repeated over a swell of ominous, almost orchestral keyboard textures, and a quiet, indecipherable gush of voices. Truly a stunning track and sure to have you completely entranced by it's end. You may not have heard of them now, but you can bet it won't be long before you see **Internal Fusion** being mentioned as among the best in the ambient-percussion genre. Staalplaat. JM.

INTERSYSTEMS - Free Psychedelic Poster Inside CD.

We all have Christoph Heemann to thank for re-issuing this impossibly obscure rarity from 1968, which was previously only (unavailable as a privately pressed LP. It's a brain boggler too, this album. What it is: a floating, not always linear narrative concerning the romantic

adventures of "...a little plastic boy and girl. His name is Gordy, her name is Renee..." which has been interspersed with a shifting collage of piercing white noise, hard electronic sound splices, and some great spacy organ tones which make the piece sound like a wacky avant-garde radio drama. Primary complaints: the dialogue is full of late 60's slang which hasn't dated so well, and the inherent distortion in the vocals makes this virtually impossible to listen to on headphones. Other than that, I'd have to declare this one seminal piece of ephemera. Streamline, Hornegasse 2, 52064 Aachen Germany. JS.

JLIAT - 16:04:94 CD/The Dancing Horse CD.

Two CDs (about a year between 'em) from this intriguing English artist, both of which apply similar approaches: a very comforting singular tone that's looped and expanded into one long droning piece of ambience. Call it minimalist if you will, but such a tag says nothing for its overall serene beauty and detracts from the radiant qualities it exudes. These pieces welcome you with embracing arms, surround you with a warm omnipotent glow, than transport you on an infinite ascension to the heavens. Indeed, if I were a religious man, I would certainly find some sort of divine inspiration in all of this. Its not ground breaking, similar techniques were applied by LaMonte Young way back when, but its certainly conducive to relaxation and meditation, and pretty darn worthy of your time and money. Available in the US from Anomalous. JM.

JOURNEY INTO DARKNESS - Near Death Experience CD.

It was bound to happen sooner or later...a host of death and black metal folks aspiring to be the next **Mortiis** (or just plain jumping on the bandwagon) by creating ominous keyboard music. Giving credit where credit is due, some are pulling it off rather well (**Equitant**, **Cernunnos Woods** among others...but both of them were doing it well before **Mortiis** even made it to these shores)...but not **Journey Into Darkness** -- a new project featuring ex-members of the band **Sorrow**. The only noteworthy aspect of this is the use of real, and rather heavy percussion. Otherwise, its just plain intolerable, gothically twinged monotone and super basic keyboard patterns....varying only in tempo but rarely in texture. Lots of work to be done before I garner much respect for these guys. None of the Above 2530 Middle Country Rd. Centereach, NY 11720. JM.

K2 & DE FABRIEK - Noise Tournament Vol. 2 7".

As the title implies, this is the second in a series of 7"s in which Japanese noise and rhythm master **K2** collaborates with an artist of his choice. The first one featured **The Haters**, while this one, as you can see, features Holland's **De Fabriek**. If you're familiar with the work of both artists then what you'll find here shouldn't come as too much of a surprise...distorted rhythms, harsh mechanical bangs, loops, and a whole lot of hollow metallic noises building to a boisterous climax. Structure and chaos converge with chaos inevitably

coming out ahead in the end. Enjoyable (somewhat) on a small 7" scale, but anything more and I think I'd have gone mad. Comes packaged in a day-glo printed baggie. Kinky Music Institute. JM.

KAPOTTE MUZIEK - Add 3"CD.

In what seems to have become the flavor of the day lately (though the practice has been in use for some time), this is another in a series of CDs designed to be played via the shuffle mode (ie hit the random button on your CD player and let it do the rest). As with most CDs of this ilk, what typically results is an unfocused melange of sounds with no binding structure to hold it together. In this case, the sound is mostly of a concrete nature...uneventful, non melodious rumbles, environmental ambience, and abstract noises with nowhere to go but in circles. Not too much fun....nice packaging though. Staalplaat. JM.

EDWARD KA-SPEL - Chyeck China Doll & Aszhyd China Doll 2CD.

The tired old calliope wheezes its twisted little ditties just slightly off-key in the distance, while an endless parade of equally twisted sideshow characters drift in and out of your vision. You enter one of the gaudily colored tents only to find yourself in the ring performing a dance naked for the bored audience. You meet your own eyes, shrug, and decide to seek entertainment elsewhere. But not before you see a lovely innocent girl set herself on fire in another ring, only to rise a lascivious succubus from the ashes....

And so *Chyeck China Doll* goes. Very restrained, slowly melting and reforming the same yet different understated electronic keyboard and percussion provide the musical backdrop for the Dark Carnival of flesh and religion gone bad painted by Edward Ka-Spel (of *Legendary Pink Dots* and *Tear Garden* fame) in his laconically-delivered lyrics. *Chyeck* is truly a creation of warped beauty, made all the more lovely by Patricia Wright's violin and Steven Stapleton's subtle surrealist tape-stamp.

For this double album re-release with *Aazyhd*, Staalplaat adds two tracks to *Chyeck*'s original twelve. "The Forbidden Zone" works with the rest of the album, although after the great variety of musical sounds on *Chyeck*, the rather monotonous solo keyboard comes as a bit of a shock. Not as much of a shock as "Colour Me Vexed, Desiree," though -- this lengthy (10 minute plus) musique concrete sound collage just doesn't fit well with the rest of the album. But hey, it's a bonus track, so who cares?

Aazyhd China Doll has some of *Chyeck*'s sideshow feel in the lyrics, but musically it sounds a lot darker. Something about this album is deeply disturbing, but I'm not sure what

(which makes it all the more disturbing). No jaunty violin lines here -- they're replaced with demonic/angelic voices barely audible in the background, ticking metronomes and many other electronically treated percussives, tortured guitars (credited to Stret Majest), and ever-present, ever more unsettling synth stylings. I like it, but I wouldn't listen to it while ingesting serious hallucinogens. Standout tracks for me were "The Unfortunate Demise of the Fabulous Puccini Brothers" (more twisted carnival mixed with religious imagery), "Nuts in May" ("Nuts in May go firing guns while nuts in June write speeches..."), and "Traitor's Gate" (a darkly orchestrated tale of love betrayed).

The re-release of *Aazyhd* also has a bonus song: the lengthy and almost impossible to describe "Witchfinder's Suite (Parts I-VI)." Ranging from baroque harpsichord to tribal drums to evil orchestra to Middle Eastern torture sounds, overall the feel reminds me most of *Sol Invictus* or *Fire & Ice*, but with more diverse and intricate music (and more noise!). By the eleven minute point it gets a bit repetitive, but by that time "Witchfinder" has drawn you into its dark and oppressive mood so deeply that you really don't notice. As for this 2-disc re-release as a whole: highly recommended. If you don't have the albums already, you need this. Staalplaat. DA.

KIRCHENKAMPF - Lazarus Rising CD.

A very pleasant and calming CD, moving away from the murkier elements of early *Kirchenkampf* tapes while expanding on the spacier, bright noodlings of *Gravity of Grace* and *Exodus*. As it stands, the closest comparison I could make would probably be early *Tangerine Dream*, but even saying that is a bit misleading. Wavering keyboard modulations radiate a sort of transcendental aura and cosmic energy while a nice, glossy drone shimmers and glides underneath. There's a certain serenity as well as pureness to these works that's quite attractive, and great for when you need a break from the suffocating gloom and doom you may be used to. Certain tracks however, particularly "Meditation 1", are seriously lacking in complexity with John resorting to rather simplistic, dare I say, almost Casio sounding plinks and plunks. But a comment like that I'm sure will have some people running for the hills. Before you freak out, take a stroll down to the last part of this CD for some extreme mind-expanding spaciness on "Into the Deep" (more!!) and some cold, isolationist tones on "Forty Days in the Desert" (more, more!!!). Not all is happy at the *Kirchenkampf* household, and here's proof. I admit to being a bit turned off to this for about the first three listens, but repeated run-throughs have shown it to grow on me, substantially. If

you know what to expect I'm almost positive that you'll enjoy it....if you approach it expecting more of what you heard on *Invisible*, you'll be sadly disappointed. Cohort Records PO Box 8076, Oshkosh, WI. 54903-8076. JM.

THOMAS KONER - Aubrite CD.

Those having heard *Koner*'s previous 3 CDs and numerous video soundtracks won't be disappointed. *Aubrite* is a mix of very familiar ingredients: truncated, filtered, muted and processed gong samples are rendered unrecognizable until only the bone-shaking sub sonic elements remain. Add in some superb atmospheric and very subtle melody phrases and you have *Aubrite*. Unfortunately, the same description applies to all of *Koner*'s releases, and whilst the combination was groundbreaking in 1993 with *Nunatak Gongamur*, other artists have since successfully adopted a similar style and have taken the 'dark ambient/isolationist' formula to a higher level. *Koner*, ironically, is becoming a clone of the very genre he pioneered. This is not, however, to say that *Aubrite* is a poor album. To the contrary, for even an average *Koner* album is better than most of the competition. For newer fans, *Aubrite* would be a perfect place to start, if only because it is so representative of his output. For the same reason, long-time fans should not expect any surprises but be quietly satisfied that yet another offering has hit the marketplace. Barooni. BL

LAND - Land CD.

Somewhere between a kind of progressive jazz-rock that I haven't heard since the late '70's early 80s heyday of *Brand X* and *King Crimson*, the extreme experimental jazz one would expect to hear at NYC's Knitting Factory, and the moody ethnic ambient of *Bloody Tourist*-era *Shinjuku Thief* lies the territory mapped out by *Land*, Jeff Greinke's new group project. Although it takes a few cues from Greinke's last solo album *Big Weather* (on which *Land* guitarist Dennis Rea guested), *Land* has a wonderfully raw, creative quality produced by the infusion of ideas from several artists that has sometimes seemed to be lacking in Greinke's recent solo work. Although all four members are experienced musicians, this doesn't mean they are afraid to take risks with *Land*. Going from quiet ambience to squonky noise as they move from track to track, *Land* produces some of the freshest material I've heard in a long time. As with all experiments, of course, a few of the tracks here don't quite hang together, but these are in the minority. I was particularly disappointed by "Ku" and "Shu", which I expected from their names (two Egyptian Gods) to be mystically charged pieces. "Ku" suffered from a lack of integration -- the musicians all seemed to be flying in different directions at top speeds, leaving the listener disoriented at best, irritated at worst. "Shu" suffered from the opposite problem -- it didn't seem to go anywhere at all. The rest of the album, though, is nothing short of amazing. Talking about one of the eight tracks on *Land* could take most of the review; most run longer than seven minutes, and cover a hell of a lot of ground. Your favorites are going to depend on what style you favor;

CHILDREN OF CAINE VOL. I ISSUE I

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personally, I go for the moody, dark, prog-jazz and ethnic ambient stuff, but some of the noisier offerings were cool too. On the noisy end, the appropriately named "Bustle" has a frenetic feel, anchored by deep voiced ritualistic drumming and percussion from Ed Pias, on top of which are layered incredibly unique and unnerving treated trumpet squunks from Lesli Dalaba and staticked guitar from Dennis Rea, with Greinke's keyboards weaving it all together. The unlikely combination of these hums, rattles, squeaks and thrums sounds like an urban pagan ritual at a free jazz held under cover of darkness beneath an abandoned railway bridge over fast moving water. Jacks has much the same general feel, although with more funky rhythm and less uncontrolled frenzy. "Nightnoise" is the star of the prog-jazz side, with its quiet backdrop of understated keyboard and percussion allowing Rea's mellow guitar to shine. The opening Caravan has an unsettling, surreal brightness, like alabaster moonlight creating a dreamscape that could never exist in full sun; the track moves and evolves, holding you spellbound, wondering what lies beyond the next dune on the caravan's route. And "India" makes an incredible closer: set adrift on the sacred Ganges river by Greinke's minimalist synth drones and Pias' gentle percussion, the track floats downstream drinking in the frantic calm that is the rhythm of life in India, new themes entering and interweaving in a multitude of instrument voices, restless trumpet, guitar, and keyboards anchored in ancient rituals by incredible tabla work, ending on a melancholy note perhaps as a funeral barge is pushed toward the sun by wailing mourners. All in all, a remarkable album, and a stimulating mental and spiritual journey. I look forward to the next outing. Extreme. DA.

LAVRA - Deep Blue Nothing CD.

Despite its proximity to Sweden and Norway, Finland has yet to fully contact the dark virus being radiated from those countries, though they have managed to stake a small parcel of their own in the ever expansive gloom and doom market. Enter Lavra. Can't say its metal, not heavy enough for that...more goth rock that likes to tap the doom metal vein for its structure and approach. Hollow production aside, *Deep Blue Nothing* is a well thought out album that's conventional in the sense that all instruments of conventionality are present (guitar, bass, keyboards, drums, vocals) but unconventional in that they are played dolefully, almost frustratingly, slow...as if an ever-present umbrella of gloom hangs over their heads. Dark guitar melodies weaving intricately between epic, sometimes beautiful, keyboards sections, the singer delivering his lines in a forever depressed Ian Curtis fashion (darker and more evil though). This took a few spins for me to appreciate it...but that I did (for the most part). Now the question is, how to get me out of this funk? Demonosound. JM.

LEGENDARY PINK DOTS - From Here You'll Watch the World Go By CD.

Surprise! Another Pink Dots CD. Some material on this release can be summed up as "psychedelic folk rock with drums". The album is acoustic oriented -- with electric guitar,

synth, effects, and woodwind warbling in and out. the woodwind playing on parts of this release reminded me of (oddly enough) the prog group **Van Der Graaf Generator**. The use of (real) drums has provided this group with some much needed backbone. the vocals are a little less mokey (but not too much less) than on the previous four releases. It also appears that they've jettisoned their producer (I hope) and their old record company (it says so on the press release) as shown by the freshness of the feel of this album. While the brooding ear-candy excursions of the last four or so albums will be missed (slightly) the stabs at poppiness won't. As a bonus you get a great smoking space rock piece, a dream-tone piece, and a couple trademark tick-tock robot songs. Purty good. Soleilmoon. TJ.

LE SYNDICAT - Rectitude CD/Maximalist CD.

I liked *Le Syndicat* best around 1990 and 1991, when they were in the midst of their militaristic panzerbeat phase (*Sardanapale* on Staalplaat for example). These two CDs represent the before and after (*Le Rectitude* and *Maximalist* respectively) and effectively show how they've gone from one end of the spectrum to another all the while showing a willingness to barrage the listener with sensory overload. Pure's *Le Rectitude* is a re-release of a cassette from, hmm, I'd guess around 1984 or '85. It presents them at the height of severity; very dry, almost brittle cracks and tears with just the *finest* hint of rhythm provided from its loops. By its very definition, the ultimate in difficult listening. Daft's *Maximalist*, on the other hand, is *Le Syndicat* at their most rhythmic. A compilation of works stemming from 1992 through 1994 its a highly digitalized, energetic release of mostly fast moving beats, loops, and mechanical, almost robotic, chirps, whirrs, and chimes. Its a rather unrelenting, albeit soft, assault that doesn't do much beyond wearing out its welcome by around the ninth or tenth track.

Ultimately its just too repetitive without enough variation between songs...track 5 could be track 10, track 10 could be track 14...its almost all the same. With that being said, I still have a certain attraction to *Le Syndicat*...but obviously I'm unable to put it into words. Pure/Daft. JM.

LIFE GARDEN - Ahitanaman CD.

Straight up, a triumphant recording. No one, with the exception of periodic collaborators *Voice of Eye*, extracts the same awe-inspiring breadth of emotion and sound from their instruments as *Life Garden* does. A high achievement in itself, but as always, one made all the more astounding in that they employ no keyboards to work their spellbinding magic. Absent is usual fourth (ex?) member Bil Yanok, but his presence is hardly missed, and if anything, *Ahitanaman* seems more focused and cohesive than past attempts. These are compositions that capture the essence of primitivism with deep exotic rhythms, ringing percussion, and celestial chants, but are then catapulted into the present and hereafter with digitally treated and effects drenched sounds. The wonderful soaring wails of Su Ling entangle themselves into every corner of this recording, sinuously wrapping themselves around the resonant textures and tones, and depending on the piece, can be delivered in either a "nasally" and timid manner, or one that's deep, soulful, and alluring. *Ahitanaman* rises and falls with an unpredictable regularity, ascending to fever pitched heights of tribal hysteria in one track, then spiraling off into unsettling void of mutating, digitized sounds and ghostly manifestations. The fact that it all converges so seamlessly proves why *Life Garden* is virtually unmatched in their profession. Brilliant? I'd say so. Agni Music. JM.

FRANCISCO LOPEZ - Warsawa Restaurant CD.

After the success of *Azoic Zone* brought little

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known Lopez critical acclaim, he is now on his own with what I believe is his first solo CD. Following in the footsteps of Thomas Koner, *Warsawa Restaurant* ups the minimalist ante laid down by the reclusive German, providing some of the most restrained quiet sounds yet to be heard. Resembling what can only be described as a huge distant waterfall with the entire top-end of the audio spectrum removed, each track takes minutes to gradually emerge, where it remains for only a few precious moments before fading out just as slowly. Whether the two minutes of dead silence between most tracks was intentional or not is debatable, but it does heighten the awareness of what is actually there, however subtle. Unfortunately, some segments are so low in the mix that only the hiss of the master tape can be heard (indeed, a powerful hi-fi system is needed to appreciate what could be mistaken for a blank CD!), and the "sound" that is there can be so motionless that I begin to question the artistic merit of such a project. Has Lopez taken the isolationism thing too far? Will his next release be just a 70 minute blank CD to rival John Cage's "4:33"? I hope not, but for those interested, try *Azoic Zone* first and proceed with due caution. Trente Oiseaux. BL.

L.O.S.D./AUBE - Organic One/Pulmoplexus Split 3" CD.

Staalplaat continues to find ways to dazzle us with unique packaging, and this is one of the most amazing ones I've seen since *Rapoon's Raising Earthly Spirits*; glued on top of a piece of Plexiglas, banded by a strip of paper, and enclosed in a fold out diamond shaped sleeve (with liner notes) lies said 3" CD. Would seem quite labor intensive to construct, but that's no concern of mine, nor should it be of yours. However, my enthusiasm for the packaging failed to carry over into the music...at least for the first half, credited to the Amsterdam based *Laboratory of Sonic Discovery*. Entitled "Organic One", it's a ten minute piece of only marginally interesting "ambience" murky and underwater sounds with just a hint of evolution taking place during it's allotted ten minute time frame. It's minimalistic at best and downright boring at worst. Luckily, they've got the ever innovative *Aube* to follow hot on their trail and essentially save this disc from mediocrity (musically speaking that is!) . For this release, we see *Akifumi* using lungs as his only source material. As is the case with a lot of *Aube* releases, the exact means of extracting these sounds is anybody's guess. Things start off ambient enough... a restrained and constant breathing ('natch) sound that's eventually consumed by added layers of brittle, crunchy noises and what sound like sub-aquatic, sonar bleeps. That these sounds were actually derived from a set of lungs is mind boggling...but then, nothing should be much of a surprise coming from *Aube* Staalplaat. JM.

LULL- TimeBox 2X7".

The prolific master of deep, dark ambience returns with a double 7" set of all new material in a numbered edition of 500. Although the packaging isn't outstanding, the music, like most *Lull*, certainly warrants a listen. The four tracks, although averaging only 5 minutes in length (a rare thing for *Harris*), aptly

demonstrates *Lull's* trademark droning soundscapes; his familiar echoing, cavernous sound unaffected by the time limitations imposed by the 7" format. *Time Box* is actually well named, as it truly achieves the effect of making time stand still...if only I didn't have to get up and change the record every five minutes! Aque Records. BL.

MACROBACILLUS - Diarrhetic Discharges Vol. 1 CS.

Singularly repulsive collaborative effort between harshheads *Macronympha* and Cleveland sick-puppy *Bacillus*. Barring the unexplained absence of bass-tones -- chalk it up to a final mix job from Peter Keller rather than the bass-happy J. Roemer -- few surprises await the listener: very infectious ear-scorching rectal fascination, representing some of the most disgusting, disturbing, discharges I've heard in recent months. Quite satisfying spewage in other words, and though frequently hovering several thousand cycles above the proverbial Shit Barrier, I really didn't mind -- even a filthy bastard like me can only take so much crap. Their intentions are clear though and summarized quite thoroughly in the liner notes: "Feeling sick? Blow it out your ass." As I'm sure we all can appreciate, a rare humanitarian gesture like that is bound to be noticed, and sure enough, halfway through side Bowel (I believe it was "Necrotised Intestinal Wall Lining"), I found myself in dire need of a personal waste management facility (a difficult prospect when you're cruising along at 120 clicks.) Much as I'd love to get into the gory details, suffice it to say, I'll never forget the look on that hitchhikers face. Well, maybe I will -- it was somewhat obscured under the circumstances. (Those of you amazed that anyone would sink this low for the sake of one lousy review obviously haven't been paying attention). Side Anus is somewhat less bowel-movement inducing, rarely venturing below the macrobaccilian scaled high-powered scrape, and it is my feeling that, should all 69 recipients survive "Massive Bout with Dysentery", a wondrous new era of universal utopian fetishism may well embrace us all. The perfect gift for the weak of stomach. Rolands has nothing on these guys. Clotted Meat Portioning. JK.

MACRONYMPHA - Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania LP.

In the American noise scene, few bands are more extreme than *Macronympha*, and perhaps only *Taint* or *Skin Crime* would be comfortable wearing a similar crown. Aside from those two, few can approach the sheer brutality of this release on Praxis Dr. Bearmann. In a scene that thrives on pushing the envelope, *Macronympha* goes one step further, uncompromising in their approach and unflinchingly spewing forth hostility as they bulldoze their way through 2 sides of malevolent noise. In fact, anyone harboring a substantial degree of hatred for their urban surroundings can certainly find solace in this LP. Unlike a lot of bands, there's absolutely no attempt to disguise their convictions...these guys want you to know what they think and could give a shit if you don't agree. At any rate, musically, *Pittsburgh* sees *Macronympha*

doing what they've always done...which is over the top bombardments of mid-level noise with plenty of squiggles, feedback, and general chaos. Very pure and extreme, but so thick and unrelenting that it becomes almost numbing, in the end, losing the effect that it perhaps could or should have. A wall of sound and nothing else. A definite nod to Praxis for the stunning packaging, which includes a massive fold out poster of an extremely shocking image (best left to the imagination). Fear and loathing in Pittsburgh? Praxis Dr. Bearmann. JM.

MAEROR TRI - Myein CD.

Thanks to the kind folks down at ND in Austin Texas, the music of this fine German trio has finally been released domestically...this following 2 CDs, some 7"s, and a ton of cassette releases, some of which were quite easy to find, others which were next to impossible to obtain without the right connections. Worry no more my friends, now you too can be the proud owner of a *Maeror Tri* CD...and at a reasonable price. Lucky you eh? Throughout all those above releases, *Maeror Tri* has begun to perfect their technique and *Myein* shows them at near perfection....in fact if they can get better than this, I'd love to hear it. The three tracks here (a whopping 74 minutes total) show a patient approach being applied...each piece begins slowly and with calm restraint, then builds and blossoms into long mind expanding cosmic drones and deep rumbles. There is a serene and tranquil undertow to these tracks (particularly the second, "Desiderium") that's strikingly beautiful and wondrous...soft guitar timbres and floating textures melt and morph into one another in an ethereal meditative dream state...taking us into higher levels of consciousness...to Utopia and beyond. If you thought you'd experienced true ambience before then you ain't heard *Maeror Tri*...no gimmicks, no bullshit, just the real stuff. So very little music I've heard exudes such warmth.....so why is it I've got goosebumps? ND PO Box 4144, Austin, TX. 78765. JM.

MALFORMED EARTHBORN - Defiance of the Ugly by the Merely Repulsive CD.

A side project born of members from *Napalm Death*, *Brutal Truth*, and *Exit 13* (with a special appearance from ganja), this CD covers a wide variety of ground -- some of it you could dance to, some of it thrash to and some of it kill to! Anyone into *Skinny Puppy* and their ilk, or perhaps *Godflesh*, should check this out. "Intoxicating Touch of Freedom" and "Nature Destroys to Build" definitely step into the *Swans/Godflesh* territory, while tracks like "Random Memory Erased" and "Ninth Circle" have a more techno beat-oriented style. With a couple of death ambient tracks to top things off, it offers plenty for your cash. Don't think that they're merely aping styles though -- this is a good, solid recording. Somebody had fun making this and it shows -- there's a looseness about it that's appealing and you can tell they weren't taking themselves too seriously. The only criticism I really have is that it was recorded on an 8-track cassette, and the sound quality suffers a little, especially in the drum department. Hopefully, they'll do a follow up with somebody footing the bill -- but if you're

interested, don't let that stop you from checking this out. Relapse. BS.

MANDIBLE CHATTER - Grace CD

The third CD for **Mandible Chatter** sees them charting new, untrodden territory...away from the darker aspects of predecessor *Hair Hair Lock and Lore* and into a more illuminating realm. *Grace* is a carefully thought out, well executed release that navigates graciously (pun intended) from one style to the next, magically remaining focused even when the mood or tempo change as dramatically as it does. The titles of *Grace* reflect a feeling of being lost in a vague, blurry environment, and the music follows suit accordingly, as personified in the calming and beautiful acoustic melody of "Forty Mile Lullaby". To listen to *Grace* in its entirety is almost like being in a room with a crowd of people and having the ability to slip into their minds as they lapse into a comfortable (and sometimes uncomfortable) day dream state. Perhaps I'm being a bit ambiguous as to the music on this disc, but that's simply because there is no definitive explanation for it all... electro-acoustic, obscured non-descript soundscapes, percussion., classical minimalism, surreal aural realms...all gathered and bound together with much care and precision. Where to next guys? Manifold. JM.

MANON ANNE GILLIS - Euragine CD

After a five year hiatus, Manon Anne Gillis (formerly just Anne Gillis) has finally issued this CD of new work which was finished in June of 1994. And what a release it is! Ms. Gillis, who is certainly one of France's strangest and most unique sound artists, has chosen to continue working in the vein of her previous five releases: electronically treating

and arranging numerous source materials, which vary from musical instruments such as zither and flute, to non-conventional items like nails and a sandalwood fan. She has always likened her work to "the dawn of life and its fossils" and has frequently produced pieces which were strongly organic in nature. *Euragine* however, focuses more on sculpted/treated samples, which overall strengthens the compositions, if only slightly diminishing the visceral impact. In fact, many of the pieces still recall natural processes: "Cocalfath" sort of sounds like a chorus of frogs, while the phenomenal closing track, "Cendibilis" could be a lullaby for extra-terrestrials. Once again, Anne has created a work of great depth and expanse which makes it my top pick for 1995. SFCR. JS.

MASONNA - Destructive Microphone 5".

"WHY THE FUCKIN' HELL CAN'T I GET THIS GODDAMN RECORD TO PLAY FOR SHIT?!" A common sentiment of grinding teeth frustration directed at a 5" diameter piss-yellow vinyl disc. The tracks begin where most tracks end on the longer lasting pleasure of 7 and 12 inch plastic penetrators. Sweat beads form trying to force the automatic arm return past the point of no return. Impossible to play, it is, garnishing dumbfounded vapid stares, unless the function is broken (dusty thrift store phonographs would meet this requirement). Reams can be spent gratuitously over interpreting the ramifications behind producing user-unfriendly merchandise in this quick-fix consumer society, but in short, novelty has a price. Caveat Emptor. This drone managed to circumvent the odd format by playing it on a miniature portable turntable and through the constricted output of a two-inch

speaker was two snacks of the usual Masonic mayhem. Shifting grating walls of highly processed and distorted Japanese primal screaming, and wailing digital delay splicing staccato madness that strikes me as humorous in its sheer insistent intensity. Raw, powerful, and all too short. Five inches is not enough for this experienced noise whore. I want more. Alleysweeper. PK.

MAUVE SIDESHOW - Blood Will Tell CD.

Here's a shocker, two **Mauve Sideshow** releases within the space of about nine months! I'm told Edward Ka-Spel and I have something in common; this is one of our favorite groups. The usual clash between Treva Dea's hauntingly beautiful musings and the free-form instrumentation/song structures is here. Echoey and otherwise effects

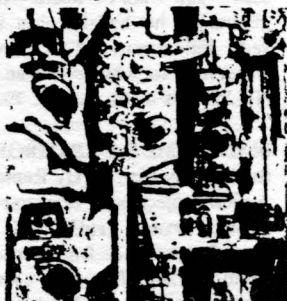
-laden female verbals float above dreamy likewise effects laden electronic weirdness. Their trademark, that venerable instrument the mellotron, is put through maneuvers (courtesy of Dusty Lee) which the Moody Blues never dreamed of. Parts of this remind me of the bleak and minimalist murkiness of *Torn Curtain* as it is more low key than *Girl* or *Wasteland*. This is a scary one by **Mauve Sideshow** standards as they take us through their haunted house. In a most chilling segment (more so than the contents of or the prospect of 100 **Lustmord** releases) on the track called "Revelations", Treva's voice suddenly rose out of the swirl and spoke an incantation which made my hair stand up on my neck; then an industrial storm ensued, a real irreligious (complete with twisted organ) attention getter. The descriptors I've used should not lead one to think of the Cold Meat goth bin; one should rather think of groups to which they have a greater affinity, such as **Contrastate**. Strictly speaking, this group is a genre unto its own (okay, "anti-gothic"). Ventricle...available from Psychedelic Pig. TJ.

MEGAPTERA - Disease CD.

If given the chance, the one review I'd detract from last issue would have to be the one I did for **Megaptera's** *Beyond the Shadow* CD. And while I still say it's not the best work they've ever done, it's nowhere near as bad as I made it out to be. I don't know exactly what I was thinking at the time, but I suspect that the volume at which I was playing it (too low) had something to do with it. Like that release, *Disease* needs to be played loud, so as to allow those agonizing, death-industrial vibes to achieve their maximum potential. But in general, *Disease* is a much better effort than *Beyond the Shadow* (as evident even at low volumes) and unquestionably the finest and most intense **Megaptera** has recorded to date. The sounds are clearer and more defined and, above all, more varied. The first track, "The Passage to Your Evil Dreams" begins with a sample from, I believe, *Exorcist III*, which continues throughout its entirety, heavy atmospheric drifts and deadly cold, pulsating rhythms occupying much of the forefront. Pure and simple, it's the epitome of horror ambience, done just the way you like it. Not a band to let up once they've started, the two proceeding tracks "Disoriented" and "Haunted By Demons" go even further into their exploration of the shadowy depths of derangement and psychosis, with deeper, more obscured and more absorbing sounds...a merging of chilling, entombed atmospheres, hidden voices, and intermittent rhythms. All of this ultimately culminates in the final track, the four part, nearly 30 minute "The Squire Goes Insane". From the minimalistic glacial ambience of the 6 minute "Warm and Relaxed", the sounds slowly build, **Megaptera** adding layers of haunted factory-noises and heavy reverberating clangs for "Evil Thoughts Are Growing", and then psychotic violin screeches and a lurching, heavy rhythm in the *Memorandum*-ish "Going Berzerk and Hits His Wife With a Hammer." The pinnacle of all this arrives with a monstrously deep and ominous series of bangs in "Panic, Leads to Suicide", before we're finally swept away, lifeless and in shock, on a

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bleak tonal undercurrent. A draining experience and a total freaking must for connoisseurs of death industrial. Art Konkret. JM.

DANIEL MENCHE - *Furious Eclipse* 12"LP.

Kudos to Soleilmoon for venturing into the vinyl forum...what a handsome package it is to...clear, virgin vinyl, wrapped in Japanese art paper, with a fiery color print on the plastic sleeve detailing the contents. As if that weren't enough, there's demonic Menche music on the inside! What more could one ask for?! Menche, true to form, again stretches the very definition of noise. Always immensely likable and friendly, but not forgoing some of the more horrific elements typically associated with the genre. Each side of the *Furious Eclipse* is broken down into several movements -- short movements albeit, but the epitome of what is becoming Daniel's "style". Tracks start indiscriminately, then are absorbed by waves that stem from the bowels of the furnace...fractures, growls, and ominous hisses that rattle the floorboards and chip away at the walls. What makes this different, and ultimately succeed, is the pace at which Menche presents it all. Not an all out barrage of noise, but much slower to evolve and only marginally abrasive...pieces that burst into flame only after they've been left to smolder in their own ash...a pressure cooker bubbling its way to an impending explosion. Fucking lovely. Soleilmoon. JM.

DANIEL MENCHE - *Legions in the Walls* CD.

I love the name of this CD...it, along with most of Menche's titles, seems to sum up the music almost perfectly. *Legions in the Walls*, to me, connotes images of an army of unstoppable monstrosities tearing through formidable, concrete walls in search of edible prey. The recordings here are a collection of live pieces ("ultra physical performances...performed at ridiculous volumes" according to the liner notes and cover) stemming from 1994 to July of 1995. Put into ascending numerically titled portions ("Wall 1", "Wall 2" and so on up to "Wall 9"), it's Menche in his rawest, most primitive of states. I imagine it lost something in the transformation of performance to disc (especially since I've heard Menche is unreal to witness live), but it's still an intense expression of pure, sweat drenched, temperature rising noise. There's a fire in the belly of this machine, and Menche's there to add the fuel! Compared to studio works like Soleilmoon's *Furious Eclipse* or *Static Burn*, it seems more one dimensional and slightly less complex, but what it lacks in that department, it makes up for it in unleashed fury and power. In track after track, treated sounds are turned into a metallic oceanic roar full of clawing, razor sharp edges, spacious "bangs", and softer, varying degrees of subterranean white noise, even, at times, coming dangerously close to ambient. Throughout it all, there's a feeling of something rumbling and sinuously writhing deep beneath the soil, and at any minute you're sure it's going to burst forth, grab you by the ankles, and drag you down into its lair for a mid-afternoon snack. The sparse layout of the packaging itself is tasteful and well done, but on all accounts, misrepresentative of the realms

being explored. I freaking love this guy! Trente Oiseaux. JM.

MERZBOW - *Mort Aux Vaches* CD.

What can you say? Another Merzbow disc. Either you like the stuff and this one will fulfill you quite nicely, or you don't and it's just a bunch of annoying static. I, like most people, fall somewhere in the middle. This Merzbow disc, however, manages to have a few distinctive features, however slight. Walls of uncompromising sonic violence tear away at the ears on one track, but slightly at the edge of perception are these subtle, almost gentle sounds that compete for your earspace. You keep straining to hear them but they are never really born, they are always simply lingering there. Breaks in the noise are nice set-ups for when full onslaughts are in effect, and the breaks happen quite often. This disc is from the Staalplaat series covering live experimental shows on a radio station in the Netherlands. I found it most effective at a low volume, just grinding away in the background. Oh yes...and in keeping with most Merzbow releases, there are naked, tied-up Japanese girls on the cover. Surprise, surprise. Staalplaat. VH.

MILITIA - *New European Order* 2xLP +12".

With a name like Militia and an album provocatively titled *New European Order*, one would expect this to consist of enough controversy, both musically and politically, to eclipse even *Genocide Organ*. Despite whatever serious connotations this may suggest, *New European Order* is actually a surprisingly refined piece of work. Recorded and performed between 1993-1995 and slapped onto four and one half sides of vinyl, it can be a lot to digest. In general though, the sound is varied enough that losing interest is made to be quite a difficult task. Something I've always found frustrating is the lack of aggressive (non-ambient) percussion based bands, and Militia does a good job of at least partially filling this void. In fact, not since the hey day of *Test Department* (*Unacceptable Face of Freedom* era) has a band produced tracks of such rhythmic, combative urgency. They surge forward, often at a furious pace, and are made all the more intoxicating and hypnotic through relentless repetition and the addition of trumpet blasts, loops, and/or deep atmospheres. Tracks not percussion based are often comprised of a sullen and foggy ambience, out of which come said driving rhythms...softly at first, then escalating with a warlike vengeance. Frantic vocal announcements from the "Militia Organization" itself, as well as select samples, can also be heard in or between certain tracks, but they're either in German or just plain indecipherable, so any agenda being set forth is lost somewhere in the translation. Wonderfully packaged in a sturdy fold out package with photo adornments, it's the perfect marriage of design and music and one more reason why Praxis is quickly becoming the shit. Praxis Dr. Bearmann. JM.

MNORTHAM - *Many Rivers Move on the Surface of the Magnet* CS.

Outright amazing packaging that seems more worthy of housing a CD rather than a cassette, but hey, who's complaining? I'm feeling too

lazy to go into details (one of those days), but suffice to say, it shows an astounding amount of creativity on the part of the artist. In fact, I don't think I've seen it get much better than this. I see from his little biography here that Michael Northam is known for "creating complex string instruments out of thrift store junk", and if that's what the sound source here is then I am indeed impressed. Two 20 minute pieces take up respective sides of this cassette with each piece following a similar procedure of subtle, minimalistic ambience slowly being turned into teeming, intricately composed sound puzzles. Much like IOS has been known to do in the past (select portions of *Cancer* or *Water Seeks Its Own Level* -- minus the naturey overtones of the latter) Northam takes his time to build each piece up, progressively adding layer upon layer until the whole thing is overflowing with a variety of nuances, some delicate and intoxicating, others escalating until they teeter on the edge of discomfort. For awhile I tried to keep up with its evolution, but that was eventually deemed futile and I simply sat back and basked in what it had to offer. Very nice. Isomorphic. JM.

MORTIIS - *Keiser av en Dimensjon* Ukjent CD.

Everyone's favorite troll crawls out from under the bridge for his third, much anticipated (why?) CD, the second for C.M.I. I've yet to fully comprehend the attraction, but the kiddies all seem to like him, so maybe its me that's missing something. He's become quite prolific too, with new works already beyond the planning stages, both as Mortiis and as *Fata Morgana*. In the meantime *Keiser*, for the most part, picks up where the last two Mortiis albums left off, with the laying down of two, long tracks, moving not much faster than a mournful funeral procession. Stylistically it covers similar terrain too, though I feel a definite sense of progression to these pieces I didn't with the last two releases. Seems to be more of an emphasis on composition, production, as well as changes in direction (though not tempo). *Keiser*, rich with lofty orchestrations and majestic crescendos, flows harmoniously and with a rather commanding presence. Naturally, seeing as its a C.M.I. release and we expect nothing less, there's an underlying sense of tragedy and bereavement, which works to compliment the more stately elements accordingly. Better. Cold Meat Industry. JM.

M.S.B.R. - *Collapseland* CD.

To find me fanatical about a noise release is still pretty rare, but M.S.B.R.'s (Molten Salt Breed Reactor) latest outing is one of the most well conceptualized and downright heavy Japanoise releases I've encountered. Inspired by the earthquake that hit Kobe last year, the 5 tracks on *Collapseland* are suitably illustrative of the chaos and destruction that must have occurred (folks living in L.A. or San Francisco can surely relate). Utilizing synth, guitar synth, effects, and loops, Koji's sound is deep, thick, and totally crushing ... massive enough to cause small scale tremors and shock waves of its own (low volume, high volume., it doesn't matter). It's also incredibly varied, certainly not a trait common to noise recordings. Instead of the

same old numbing overkill of feedback and stale noise, we're treated to works with an amazing degree of textures and diversity -- whether it be the absorbing, fluctuating white noise and steam-venting atmospheres of the 25 minute epic "Shining," (a noise masterpiece if ever there were one), the cold, unnerving "ambience" and drones of "The Blaze of Collapsing Part Two" (another masterpiece!), or the penetrating loops and chaos of "Massive Construction", *Collapseland* proves **M.S.B.R.** to be at the head of the pack (along side **Aube**) in the Japanese scene. Richter scale rating? 9.5. And that's not taking into account the amazing packaging -- a booklet of processed images of the earthquake itself as token by Koji Tano and printed on high quality paper. Heel Stone Records. JM.

MURDER CORPORATION - Terminal Procedure LP.

Italy has a proud history of power electronics, what with innovators like **MB** and **Mauthausen Orchestra**, and 'newer' bands like **Murder Corporation** (as well as **Atrax Morgue**, **Iugula Thor** and others) are certainly doing their share to uphold that tradition. Nothing innovative or even too exciting happening on *Terminal Procedure*, but it is a fairly decent album of heavily overloaded frequency bombardments and squiggly, and/or diving oscillations, similar to what you'll see being spewed from comrade Marco Corbelli. Fairly mundane at low volume, but then, who the fuck plays a power electronics album at low volume?? Complexity? Forgetaboutit, you ain't gonna find it. Sheer ear piercing belches of grinding, death-obsessed noise? Now we're talking. Murder Release. JM.

MUSLINGAUZE - Izlamaphobia 2 CD.

Later **Muslingauze** releases seem to be good for one, maybe two listens, but that's about it. Sometimes they're not even good for one listen...case in point, *Izlamaphobia*, which, while more driving rhythmically, is so incredibly stale, repetitive, digitalized to the point of sterility, and most of all forthrightly dull, that stretched out over two CDs it becomes unbearable. Was hardly two (no, make that three) years ago that I liked **Muslingauze**, but this insistence on flooding the market with the same re-hashed material has made me lose any ounce of respect I once had. It's a pattern that's not likely to end, as evident in the flyer *Staalplaat* included along with this that offers a subscription to all future **Muslingauze** releases (due to the incredible amount of material they've received). All releases will be limited editions and gone quickly...now that's music to my ears! *Staalplaat*. JM.

MUSLINGAUZE - Gun Aramaic CD.

You can imagine the groan I emitted upon seeing yet another **Muslingauze** CD arrive at the 'ol PO Box, but for the first time in a long while I've actually got something truly positive to say about a **Muslingauze** release! Can you freaking believe it? And I don't even have a temperature! The law of averages certainly dictates he was bound to release something good after awhile, and *Gun Aramaic* I'm happy to report, is it. Finally, we're given something that doesn't seem stale or overtly programmed,

but simmering with genuine passion and emotion. There's also a noticeable increase in the amount of texture ... a vividness and animated quality that's been deficient in the past, sheesh, probably 8 or 9 releases. In fact, not since the **Extreme** days have **Muslingauze** sounded so fresh. Sure, there's still the dreaded and ever-present repetition factor to contend with, but it's far less evident on *Gun Aramaic* than it is on say, *Izlamaphobia* or the any number of recent offerings spewed forth by **Muslingauze**. Still doesn't make up for all the other material he's disgorged, but it is one step closer to redemption in my eyes (as if that matters). Soleilmoon. JM.

MZ.412 - In Nomine Dei Nostri Satanas Luciferi Excelsi CD.

This is a joke right? Smearing their faces with corpse paint, adorning themselves with upside crosses, posing for the camera with grim faces and menacing sneers...its all **MZ412**'s attempt to give black metal a jabbing poke in the ribs? Maybe just an attempt to cash in on the whole black metal fad? Hmmm... I can certainly appreciate the mockery if that's what it is, but this seems a little *too* far fetched. On the side panel, they've even gone so far as to claim this runs at 66.6 minutes (it ends at around the 58 minute mark). If its not a joke....well, I've got little stomach for this outside of the black metal realm (where I expect to see such exaggerated

posturing and put up with it tongue firmly clamped in cheek)... it does nothing but detract from the music not to mention make you look awfully dated and cheesy three years down the road. Whew...getting side tracked (who can blame me?)...aside from the above, and abbreviating their name from **Maschinenzimmer 412**, not much has changed from their 1990 *Macht Durch Stimme* LP on Cold Meat Industry...similar thick oozeings scraped from the bottom of a murky barrel...soulless music that's effective in it's laborious repetition and ostracization of all things warm and congenial. Nine blasphemously titled tracks of heavy electronics moving at a pace slightly above **Brighter Death Now**, so processed they crackle with dangerous static distortion (think a more evil, minimalistic **Dive**), so cold its oppressive. Percussion works its way in periodically...either as a dark clang, or as in the brilliant "Necrotic Birth," an urgent dark tribalism. It's a stunning piece and the CDs best. Image aside, this remains another fine notch in the belt for the (almost) always impressive Cold Meat. With all that being said, I'm still left wonder...does it really take four people to make this?? Cold Meat Industry. JM.

MZ. 412 - Burning the Temple of God CD.

Well, I see now that **MZ. 412**'s new found denomination is not a joke, and if anything,

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they've taken it one step further with the inclusion of, surprise, two black metal tracks (well, one and half actually)! Seems a logical enough progression (or is that digression?) and I suppose I should have expected it judging from their last, fairly recent outing. They're not bad tracks as far as black metal goes (which I profess a certain affinity for), but the super speedy, programmed drumming is for shit. At any rate, it's still only a very small portion of the CD, and the rest of the (mostly) electronically based material found here is among the strongest they've done. Joining the forces of a growing number of Swedish and Norwegian bands proclaiming a hatred for all things holy, **MZ. 412** continues to create highly unorthodox music bent on the upheaval and overthrowing of Christianity. Whether or not their music can do anything to persuade the impressionable to see their way is debatable (exactly what is the ultimate goal behind all this anyhow?), but **MZ. 412** seems bent on doing all they can. The methods employed to help further their cause include much of what they did on their previous release...that is, to create the most defiling, blasphemously dark music imaginable; pummeling ritualistic percussion, soulless and cold power electronics, burning, frazzled and distorted frequencies, demonic moans and sacrilegious samples (and of course the aforementioned black metal), are all part of their repertoire and all are utilized to maximum effect. Say what you will about their cheesy poses and corpse *Kiss* make-up, the fact remains, **MZ.412** is a force to be reckoned with. So long as they continue to make music of this caliber I'm more than happy to put up with their antics. Cold Meat Industry. JM.

NAMANAX - Cascading Waves of Electronic Turbulence CD.

If you picked up last issue featuring *Namanax* then you've probably already heard the first of the two songs on this aptly titled CD, the 11 and a half minute "Contaminating Influence". On CD though, it's a whole new ballgame, the clean production turning what was already a crushing piece of severely distorted looped percussion, into something heavy enough to produce small scale tremors. Though short by *Namanax* standards, the hypnotic rhythm seems endless... numbing all senses as it recoils and whips about in muscular bounds, wrapped tightly in an almost atmospheric swirl of electronic overload. The 47 minute title track, starts off friendly enough with a sort of fluttering 'death ray' loop that stays constant pretty much throughout the entirety of the track. But it's not long into the song before it's being mercilessly kicked, prodded, and poked at by a dozen layers of hyper, overmodulated noises... swooping dives, jarring crunches, surging static, heavy bass rumbles and so on. By the 40 minute mark any semblance of structure is all but swallowed whole as "Cascading" succumbs to chaos, becoming closer to what's being delivered by the Japanese rather than the more Westernized style of heavy electronics. Relapse. JM.

NECROPHORUS - Underneath the Spirit of Tranquility CD.

I'm guessing that Peter Andersson is feeling a bit confined with *Raison D'Etre*, and so is

branching out with several side projects as a creative outlet for his varying moods and tastes. First, there was the aggressive, industrial music of *Stratvm Terror*, then the dreamy, sometimes beaty ambience of *Atomine Elektrine*, and now *Necrophorus*. Though there's some periodic crossover of styles, overall it's a fairly big step away from the darker, more heavily atmospheric *Raison D'Etre*... *Necrophorus* is much more placid and in general, brighter. It's broken down into two sections, the first entitled the Spirit of Tranquility and the second, The Impressions of Salvador Dali. The first half (9 songs) is very spacious and aerial -- delicate and rich electronics that seem less structured and decidedly more abstract than *Raison D'Etre*, yet still carefully composed and purposeful. It's as if Peter simply let the essence of his being flow freely into the music and there's a very tangible feeling of purity and inner sanctity. The second half (6 songs) is a "figuratively interpreted homage to a selection of Dali's surreal paintings," and it shows Andersson in his most free-flowing, unconventional, and artistically liberal mode yet. It's a blurry realm of converging obscured sounds... sometimes beautiful other times dark landscapes as viewed through a prismatic lens. Not *Raison D'Etre*, but a multi-faceted and often brilliant release all the same... certainly one that deserves to be in any respectable collection. Cat's Heaven. JM.

NEGRU VODA - Voodoo Killers CS.

Nine tracks of murderous death industrial from Peter Nystrom of *Megaptera* fame. This is cold, machinic music, venturing far into the low end of the "rumble spectrum", but rounded out with raw and abrasive mechanical outbursts, gritty frequency modulations, and punishing repetitious rhythms. It's intensely powerful material, deep, loud and colossal.... just the kind of music you want playing while carving up your neighbor. Haven't determined yet if I like this more than *Megaptera*, but it's awfully close. Old Europa Cafe. JM.

NEITHER/NEITHER WORLD - Maddening Montagery and Other Fantastic Stories CD.

Mapping a dream-soaked territory in the subconscious somewhere between those claimed by *Voice of Eye*, *Current 93*, and *Love Spirals Downwards*, *Neither/Neither World's* new album *Maddening Montagery* takes you on a dark electronic journey to nether realms that end all too quickly. Images blur and blend into one another, slipping away before you can grasp them... images of forbidden rites in the inner darkness and outer Void, processions of hooded figures vanishing into the brown-purple distance, lonely wind carrying the wordless cries of those lost in limbo lands. The 10 tracks are split evenly between brooding dark ambient soundscapes like the three "Montages", and dark pop/folk songs about sin, death, and madness sung in the beguiling, twisted little girl voice of Wendy Van Dusen, who also composed most of the words and music of *Montagery*. Although I prefer the montage tracks (co-composed by Wendy and Lemon De George), it is the combination of these unfocused, drifting trip reports from the nether realms with the waking moments of clarity that isn't really as clear as it seems described in the

more traditional guitar-and-voice tunes that really sets this album apart from the madding crowd of dark ambient CDs, recreating the disturbing feeling of drifting in and out of dreams so many times you no longer have any idea where reality lies. There really isn't a bad track here, from the atmosphere-setting opening track "Montage One," with its moaning winds carrying you deep into unconscious realm filled with disturbing whispers just beyond earshot, to the closing acoustic Poe poem "Alone" included on Bright Green Records' Poe compilation *Dream Within A Dream* (see review). I especially enjoyed "Lautreamont", a gorgeous, sultry dark medieval/tribal sounding piece reminiscent of *Dead Can Dance* anchored by pounding drums and natural sounds of storm and wind distorted by physical and spiritual distance. "Outro" totally freaked me out, its chill synth and eerily distorted harmonica painting a scene of bloody clouds boiling by overhead while virgins soon to be sacrificed let loose their glittering, many feathered souls trapped inside their pale flesh in lovely, haunting song. What else can I tell you -- you need this album. Buy it, put it on, and float out of your body into a spirit haunted netherworld. Paragoric - available from Com-Four. DA.

NIHIL - Heavy Electronics Vol. I CS.

The title of this tells it like it is, 6 long-ish tracks of heavy electronics that smear the border between Japanese noise and European style power electronics (a la *Soldnergeist* or *Advokat Ihrer Hoheit*). You won't find too many piercing feedback screeches here, just dense, high voltage fields of white noise that fluctuate and roll rhythmically forward and have a similar deep crunchiness as achieved by *Namanax* and *MSBR*. Imagine if you will, what it's like to be on the bottom floor of a high story building during an explosion, as huge slabs of concrete and steel crashing down around you in an endless cascade ... this is *Nihil*. An occasional foray into more "atmospheric" territory isn't ruled out (as in the first portion of the exceptional 15 minute, "Phase 3"), and Adam proves to be equally as comfortable and adept at exploring those realms as he is the noisier ones. Great shit. Comes imaginatively packaged in tar paper and wire meshing. Pinch A Loaf. JM.

NIMOY - The Spark 7"

With images of circuitry and power lines adorning the cover as well as a dedication to Thomas Edison, it shouldn't be too difficult to determine what the inspiration behind *The Spark* was. As it stands, the music is a tribute to the virtues of electricity; throbbing, undulating, and distortion filled transmissions swarming with a frazzled, static vitality. Imagine what it would be like to travel into a dysfunctional, badly wired electrical outlet and you might get an idea of where *Nimoy* is coming from. Power electronics in every sense of the word. Ant-Zen. JM.

NOISE- MAKER'S FIFES - Soundscapes for the Inner Eye CD.

This Belgian duo have been releasing cassettes in dribs and drabs since their inception in 1990, but it took the release of this for me to get off my smelly ass and pay attention. Suffice to say,

I'm thoroughly hooked: *Soundscapes for the Inner Eye* is a bordering brilliant release of improvisational, abstract sounds swathed in a blanket of reverb and effects. Instrumentation is varied, and ranges from cymbals, violins, saws, flutes, wood instruments, and a host of other assorted devices, each treated and processed into a deep alchemic melange. Of the five pieces, 3 are over 15 minutes long (the other two are quite long themselves, 12 and 9 minutes respectively), allowing for some rather serious unrestrained sounds to develop and flower. Hypnotic drones and swarthy organic textures converge and otherwise melt into each other, perpetually in motion and quick to evolve and/or dissolve into one adventurous realm after another. Difficult to pick a stand out, but I'd have to say my favorites are probably "Beyond Description" and "Dead City", two tracks that explore the natural deep reverb of a silo. Bravo...I'm thoroughly impressed...I think I'll play it again. NMT Productions, Dr. De Meersmanstraat 37, 1070 Brussels Belgium. JM.

NOISE MAKERS FIFE - Soiree Dansante CD.

This speedy follow-up to their first CD finds N.M.F. recording music for a dance performance, so consequently they're in a much more abstract and avant-garde mode, performing not for pure entertainment/listening purposes, but for choreographed movements occurring on stage. Like most releases of this ilk, it's the kind of stuff that demands a visual accompaniment. Compared to *Soundscapes of the Inner Eye*, there's nothing linear or sequential about these pieces (in relation to each other that is), it's simply a fragmented, often surreal collage of conventional and unconventional sounds -- sometimes mirthful with wood instruments, chimes, and forays into Middle-Eastern percussion sessions, other times more droney, dense, and highly charged, closer to what you'll find on their debut CD. The ratio between the two is probably about 3:1, so there's a fair amount of compelling sequences to be found on this disc, but they remain too scattered and strewn apart to have the effect they could have had. NMT Productions. JM.

NOT BREATHING - Time Music of Quazars CD.

OK, OK...so its beat heavy dance (sort of) stuff and I like it. So sue me! But, understand that **Not Breathing** aren't creating the typical mindless, programmable crap played out at your local club. This is much more thought out and intelligent, adding healthy portions of cosmic (not weightless) atmospheres and multi-dimensional sounds into the mix, whatever rough edges that existed blended out as the beats vaporously segue into their brief futuristic ambient introductions. I can't pretend to like all of this, there's still some of the predictable elements associated with the genre, but its far better than I imagined it would be, and has garnered more than its fair share of spins. Visible Records - 2443 Fillmore Street, Suite 336, San Francisco CA. 94115. JM.

NULL - Ultimate Material II 2 LP.

Not to be confused with the similarly titled *Ultimate Material III* CD on Manifold, this is an

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entirely different entity, offering various faces of K.K. spread out over 4 slabs of stunningly packaged vinyl (among the best I've seen). Can't say I care much for the first side, "Ultimate Material II" ...annoying drill sounds that perforate the skull and proceed to agitate. Side two is much better...delicate guitar frettings, almost classifiably new age, and even mildly reminiscent of Michael Hedges (gasp!). 'Tis beautiful stuff though....very serene and hypnotic, subtle harmonies lazily blooming underneath its otherwise repetitious drone. Its a safe assumption that K.K.s next recording won't be for Wyndham Hill though....lest you got a little worried by the aforementioned comparison. OK, so side two maybe doesn't sound like it'd be your kind of thing...let's try side three, "Metabolic Tanz". Nastier stuff here ...a brawny sound sculpture of straining dynamics and fluctuating, throbs, eventually culminating into a teeming, swamy orb of energy. Nice, a definite highlight. Nothing *too* exciting on side four...two pieces of resonating guitar transmissions and/or manipulations, lots of reverb and processing utilized to achieve its desired effect. Leaves a sizable impression. Fourth Dimension. JM.

OBLIVION ENSEMBLE - Nightmare: SinistrotorsE CD.

This encompasses so many different genres I'm not exactly sure where to begin to describe it...in fact its albums like this that can drive an admittedly so-so writer to the brink of exhaustion. With myriad styles such as Goth, dark ambient, prog rock, psychedelia, experimental, (etc) woven into this one would expect it to lack cohesion, but rather *Nightmare: SinistrotorsE*, due to some incredible musicianship, is unquestionably one of the most disciplined and well structured/assembled releases I've heard in this year. The group itself bills this as a 72 minute electro-acoustic opera ...one which involves, and I quote, "attaining a spiritual purity through absolute darkness". So with that in mind, *Nightmare* can then begin to

be approached and mildly dissected. Within the maze that is this CD, you'll find songs and structures that approach conventional rock (drums, guitar, bass, vocals, you know the routine) then suddenly veer to the left as they embark into any one of the above genres. On certain tracks a female operatic voice swoons over dark sultry synth atmospheres, while others feature energetic bursts of prog rock ("Art Zoydian" I suppose) augmented by driving guitar and tight percussion sequences. Latter tracks forgo all conventionality and stick to washy layers of roaming spatial ambience. Discover it for yourself will ya? Complacency. JM.

OKTAGON - Various Artists 2LP.

As is the case with alot of the Ant-Zen comps, *Oktagon* is stylistically all over the place....a detriment for sure, but considerably less so with *Oktagon* than on previous comps. The real strength of this release stems from its quieter moments: T.G.V.T's three exotic, percussion woven entries are subtle, spooky and memorable, *Tesendalo's* one long-ish piece full of minimalistic, throbbing vibes, and *Mandible Chatter's* strange, disquieting, and uncharacteristically void of harmony or melody. My admiration continues to grow for *Law*, who show a marked improvement over their previous cassette *Malediction*, and come on strong with a meaty mixture of draconian electronics and coarse anger played out with barely restrainable force. No sugar coating here! Even more of a surprise was *Stigma*, whose first of two tracks deviates from the typical, staticy power electronics he's known for (as witnessed in the following track) and ventures into a foreboding realm of dungenous clangs, and pitch dark atmospheres. The rising orchestral section at the end closes it out beautifully. Exceptional. The rest, pieces from *Leiche Rustikal*, *Pineal Gland*, and *Rorsach Garden* are your sort of standard or above standard electro-industrial... lots of rhythmic

distortion and a fairly good intensity level, but nothing that stands out or sets itself apart. An average of three pieces from each band allows for full impressions to be formed, a rarity among comps, and certainly a selling point. Beautifully packaged and overall recommended. Ant-Zen. JM.

ONMV - Optimum Noise Maximum Volume CS.

Click. The restraints are in place. Click. The switch is flipped. What pours forth is the unholy noise. Optimum noise. At maximum volume. A mail-collaboration effort between *Macronympha* and *Thirdorgan*, the painful excesses of their rust-pitted circuitry keeps picking at the same swollen scars in their victims ears. Constant onslaughts of over modulated frequencies, grinding distortion, piercing squeals, twitching against the bonds no hope no let-up no remorse hot serrated torture churn and squall unrelenting until numbed into submission. After an eternity of an hour, the eyes are glazed over and a spittle of drool hangs from the mouth. It's a shame. Only the strong survive. Mother Savage Noise Productions. PK.

OPERATION CLEANSWEEP - Power hungry LP.

1995 and 1996 have been good, no make that great years for power electronics, for which much of the credit must certainly go to the illustrious Tesco (with honorable mentions for P.D.B., Steinklang, and select others). As if superior releases from *Genocide Organ*, *Anenzephalia*, *Con-Dom*, and *The Grey Wolves* weren't enough to quench your thirst, they've now unleashed the stunning debut LP from *Operation Cleansweep*. Taking their cue from the above mentioned comrades, as well as drawing inspiration from some of the early '80s godfathers, *Powerhungry* is an aptly titled, aggressively styled release dominated by brooding, ragged frequencies and singular low end pulsations, but rounded out with samples, hard rhythms, and an occasional commanding vocal presence. There's a palpable sense of danger throughout it all, and each successive track builds on the tension laid down by it's predecessor. If releases from the aforementioned artists signified the dawning of a new age for power electronics, then *Powerhungry* all but solidifies it...and I for one, couldn't be happier about it. Tesco. JM

OPERATION MINDWIPE - Instrumental Transkommunication CD.

The release of this marks the first CD emanating from Furnace that I've been able to appreciate. After all, as a sub-label of Silent, it was designed to release material no longer suitable for its big brother, and leaning more toward industrial (in both the bastardized and traditional sense). Frustratingly enough, most of what they've released to date, including two CDs from *Abstinance* (Darryl Hell being the main component of that group and also of O:M) has gone by without much fanfare... standard dance-industrial stuff which bored me from the get-go. Finally, they've come up with something a bit more adventurous... interesting enough for me to stand up and take notice at least. Aside from sub-titling it as "the science of transforming the energy of the dead into an

audible/visual journey" (whatever that means.. suffice to say it doesn't succeed), this CD is stripped of pretensions and gets right down to business. This is indeed industrial music in the truest sense of the word...culling its influences from *Neubauten* and adding a dash of their own inspiration. The result is a rather severe junky soundscape, lots of lashing metallic percussion and noises from the scrap yard, disembodied voices busily murmur in a surreal background, with computerized transmissions layered in and/or buried underneath it to provide a tiny element of stability. Like *Hands To* (who wear a shirt made from a similar cloth), there isn't much of an evolution to these pieces...sounds are presented (often loudly) and appreciated, but its chaotic and random nature ultimately makes it hard to latch onto. But hey, for Furnace, its a giant step in the right direction. Furnace Records/Silent. JM.

ORDO EQUILIBRIO - Reaping the Fallen...the First Harvest CD.

After hearing this release one thing will be quite evident about *Ordo Equilibrio*, they know darkness, and dearly embrace it. O.E. was formed in May of '93 by Thomas Petterson and his girlfriend Clelea Krook after Thomas left *Archon Satani* (read the "thank you's" in the liner notes and you'll see he's still pissed!). They have only released two tracks previous to this full release, and CMI enthusiasts have anticipated more for some time. Your nightmares have been answered! It opens with "De Profundis", a long desolate piece who's background sounds like hot wind blowing over scorched earth, while a chorus of voices rise and fall to the rhythm of the track. That is followed by "Where Happiness Ruled", one of the three tracks that combines acoustic guitar and death ambience, while the solemn vocals of Thomas and Clelea carry the melody. "Dominatrix Purgatory" is built upon the sound of thunder and rain, slow building tones to channel you along. Clelea repeats "I know you, I know the truth" while visions of grieving pall barriers slowly move through the mind. S & M inspires many of the tracks, as does Anti-Christian beliefs, but what you will find most of all here is darkness, never ending! Highly recommended. Cold Meat Industry. BC.

ORGANUM - Veil of Tears CD.

After several impossible-to-get limited edition 7's, *Organum* comes up with a more obtainable release: this excellent CD, which is a 57 minute tour-de-force that should please any previous fans of David Jackman and company's work. The title track, which runs nearly half an hour, is similar to 1988's *Vacant Lights* - a real time, improvised ambient piece - although it is more active and full-sounding. The other three tracks, which include an outstanding live excerpt from 1990 as well as two recent studio pieces using source material culled from earlier recordings, can be said to epitomize *Organum's* sound: impenetrable, sonorous droning which slowly churns into a crystalline mix of low undertones, metallic scraping, and shimmering flute. Another majestic release goes into the *Organum* canon. Matchless Recordings, 2 Shetlock's Cottages, Matching Tye Near Harlow, Essex M17 0QR UK. JS.

ORPHX - 02 CS/ ORIPHIX - 01 CS.

Don't be too confused by the different spellings....simply signifies a change in name from the first cassette to the second. According to my not so humble gospel, *Orphx* are undoubtedly some of the finest practitioners of galvanizing power electronics working today...yet with frustratingly little name recognition to stand behind. Their appearance on *Exploration One* certainly helps matters, but it remains only a small taste of the awesome power they possess. These two cassettes represent *Orphx* in all their glory and allow a full immersion into their often frightening world. Whizzes at the transformation of found sounds and electronics into swirling, complex nightmares and nihilistic mechanical monstrosities, they embrace elements of both *Sigillum S* (much less sterile however) and vintage *SPK* (*Leichenschrei* for example), yet take it to a whole new unclassifiable level. Shades of ambience are allowed to pierce its otherwise solid shell, but even that becomes a rather abused form of the genre in their hands. Mostly, it assaults in nauseating waves...roaring and slightly hollow and harsh sounds that ascend to rousing climaxes then fluidly crash into an orgy of churning, all encompassing atmospheres. 02 is the definite winner of the two. Somehow, despite it being entirely improvised, it seems to be more "together" and more focused...not as gelatinous, raw, or rough around the edges as 01. No matter, both are fucking great. In closing, if you'll allow me to revert to some dated hard rock terminology I'd like to state the following: *Orphx* kicks major ass! Xcreteria. JM.

O YUKI CONJUGATE - Sun Chemical CD.

Ever wonder what O Yuki Conjugate (OYC) would sound like as ambient dub? Then this disc is for you. Four different artists (Robert Hampson of *Main*, Charles Webster of *Sine*, Francois Tetaz of *Shinjuku Thief*, and "Horberrry McGeorge" = Paul Schutze), and OYC disguised as "Woodhead Gardiner," remixed tracks from OYC's last album *Equator* for this album. Aside from considerably more varied and interesting percussion than one normally finds on ambient dub albums, *Sunchemical* doesn't have much unique to offer. Go for it if you dig this kind of music; otherwise wait for their next full length. Of all the tracks, I thought OYC's remix "Sulphur" was the weakest. Most of the way through it was serviceable, danceable ambient dub, but nothing to write home about. "Niobium" from Robert Hampson and "Californium" from Charles Webster struck me about the same. The second half of the album, though, worked a lot better. "Carbon", as mixed by Franc Tetaz had a dark mysterious quality to it; slowing down the grinding dance beats gave Tetaz a chance to build quiet synth, gentle "bells", a few choice "flute" and "violin" sounds, and layered percussion into a really funky jam. "Polonium" from Robert Hampson had even more darkness and also an organic quality to it, complete with Void-voices, meadows abuzz with thousands of insects droning, and distant calls of crow and coyote. The closing track, "Bismuth" from Horberrry McGeorge (Schutze), chilled the set out with cool keyboards, trippy percussion, and liquid electronic blips and oceanic orchestral

synth sounds vaguely reminiscent of *Meddle*-era **Pink Floyd**. Very cool. Staalplaat/Soleilmoon.. DA.

PABLO'S EYE - You Love Chinese Food CD. Pablo's Eye describe themselves as less of a band than a "temporary atmosphere...a taste...a dream," likening their sonic surrealism to visuals from Rene Magritte. On this disc, they range from synth-heavy sound collage to second generation **King Crimson**-esque prog rock to worldbeat to dark ambient. They do fine with the new rock and worldbeat, but the rest isn't particularly impressive. Still, it's hard not to like these wacky Belgian folks. Will all the dark, twisted shit I'm used to, it's a bit of a relief to hear something different. And a couple pieces here really stand out. "Les Larmes du Tigre," for instance, with its beautiful female vocals and shiny-sounding guitar; "Absolute," with its funky beats and sampled story about an obsession with how the 'absolute' isn't; "The Wedding Girl," with its unforgettable synth and bass lines, sad story "the only girl he has ever known, the only one he could never have"; and brushes; and "Amb 7" with its life affirming tribal words and rhythms, and fine violin and guitar work. Keywords: bright, warm, but forgettable in its specifics. Sort of like a sunny day that you find vaguely pleasurable, but don't remember much of afterwards. Extreme. DA.

P.A.L. - Signum CD

I can hardly claim to be on top of things when it comes to electro-industrial (I purposely avoid the stuff really), so I can't say how this compares to a lot of what's out there already, but I'd venture to say its only above average. The only thing I found even remotely remarkable about this release was the sheer heaviness of the percussion...which can sound like anything from a symphony of steel workers laboring away in rigid, assembly line uniformity ("All Systems Collapsed", "Gelöbnis", "Agitation"); to rather insistent, pummeling Dive-like distortions. I like the overall mechanical, sort of robotic feel to this, as well as its purposeful driving monotony, but most of the electronics don't stray too far beyond simple sampling techniques, frequency oscillations, and three note bleeps and ker-plunks...none of which holds up well to repeated listens. Good, I suppose, for when I need something less obtrusive than noise and more active than ambient, but not much else. Ant-Zen. JM.

PARA-NOISE - TERMINAL - Fraktale7"

Though hardly a recognizable name, **Para-Noise-Terminal** have been burrowing around in the underground since 1992, working primarily with handmade instruments, analog synths, and various natural sound sources. Haven't heard any of their previous cassette only releases, but based on this I'd say they're worthy of tracking down. Side A sounds like it was recorded in a train station...lots of reverbed screeches, "pops", and heavy low-end drones, the voices of the populous manipulated and relegated to a lethargic and delusional netherworld. Side B is mostly analog synth, techno slowed to a spiraling, hypnotic pulsation. Quite different from side A, but radiating the same sense of purity and spell binding enchantment. Drone Records. JM.

PENITENT - Melancholia CD.

An aptly titled band with an aptly titled CD that continues to carry the everlasting torch of Cold Meat Industry. Like **Con Sono**, **Ildfrost**, and even **Mortiis**, **Penitent** reflects the labels current interest in more gothic-styled music, most of which I've shown only marginal amounts of interest in. To their credit, **Penitent** is probably the best of the aforementioned crop, though they do sound, I'm imagining, what **In the Nursery** might have been like had **Mortiis** been a full-time member. Nicely composed material regardless... very rich and eloquent, softly flowing orchestrations, driven forward by the inclusion of some formal percussion and moving strings. True to form, all of its rather heavily draped in a shroud of remorse and profound sadness. Repeated listens have shown any fondness for the spoken poetic, Nordic-inspired vocals I had initially to be all but non-existent -- sort of like a nasty zit on an otherwise attractive face. Cold Meat Industry. JM.

PEOPLE LIKE US - Beware the Whim Reaper CD.

More madness from these pranksters. Not nearly as collaged as their previous two CDs (one of which was a 3"), rather just surreal recontextualization of...well, I'm not exactly sure what; muzak, commercials, talk radio, easy listening, a touch of everything really...strange, sometimes manipulated sounds that made me feel like I was trapped in an elevator with a bunch of drunken lounge musicians. As usual, it sounds like they've done their homework...sifting through a library of vintage recordings and finding hordes of lost gems. Bizarre and kitschy...but therein lies its charm. Shhh, artists at work. Staalplaat. JM.

DOMINIQUE PETITGAND - II Petites Compositions Familiales 3" CD.

Lost my promo sheet for this, so I'm not entirely sure of the significance or meaning behind it, but it's sure to appeal to Francophiles and fans of naturally-recorded material. In other words, a minute portion of the market. It's very much like being stuck in the living room of a Provencal country home as Petitgand records what appears to be family members (with a high majority of children) talking about various, who knows what subjects (hey, my French sucks, what can I say?). Much of it's recorded pretty straight forward, with no manipulation other than some editing and the occasional loop -- the latter of which reminded me of something off of **Randy Greif's Alice in Wonderland** series. The music remains sparse -- accordion, guitar, and some strange, minimalistic ambience to give it a surreal, dreamy, and time-has-slowed-to-a-standstill feel. Strange material whose appeal is certainly limited, but not without a certain "je ne sais quoi" charm. Listen to while eating a baguette and drinking a cheap Rhone wine (try Guigal) for the full effect. Staalplaat. JM.

PGR - A Hole of Unknown Depth CD.

This was an upcoming release (if I remember correctly) as we were told five years ago, but the master recording was lost in purgatory, until now. Its finally here, hot on the heels of the *Mourning Book of Serpents* anthology which contains live versions of three of the four studio

tracks appearing here. The music on this CD was recorded around the same time period as the **PGR** tracks on *Fetish* (an **Arcane Device/PGR** split CD) released in 1990, and is strongly similar. The presence of high pitched feedback-like strands of sound make the music resemble at times the late, lamented **Arcane Device**. Kim Cascone unwinds studious passages of discrete ambient tones which penetrate empty space like a knife through butter. The first track is a singular high pitched tone which reverbs around, searching, dancing, tinkerbell-like. The other tracks involve spare and echoey sound passages, with other pulses and sounds swimming, surging, splashing, squeaking, or chirping into each other. One of the tracks even sounds Eno-esque (circa *Music for Films*). The music overall is unhurried, gentle, and unassuming -- abstract, but not off putting. There is no neutral gasiness here, no lushness; just sounds. At 37 minutes, a too short CD. Noctovision -- available from Silent. TJ.

PHOTOPHOBIA - Cathespin CD.

A quote from **Brian Lustmord** on the plastic cover sleeve (he likes it), and a forthcoming collaboration with (he must really like it) should certainly translate to good sales for this! And why not, having a luminary such as **Lustmord** to tout your product can do nothing but good...kind of like Stephen King prophesying, "I have seen the future of horror...and it is named Clive Barker." Funny how Barker then went on to whip Kings ass in terms of sheer originality and outright talent. Dumb analogy aside, I'm comfortable in saying I like this better than *any Lustmord* I've heard. Not just a little more either, but a whole heck of a lot more (though I'm sure many will disagree)! Cold, deep tonal drifts and echoey machinic clangs that extend downwards towards the chasm, then reverberate back in even thicker, darker and more compelling forms. "Blown Hole", the fourth and final track, is mind blowing. 30 minutes of threatening roars from the abyss that become *incredibly* loud and colossal, then plunge downwards into the cavernous dwelling from whence they came. There is no dormant period either... as quickly as it stops, it starts all over again, this time in even greater volumes and magnitudes. Make sure you've got a clean pair of undies handy...after this you'll need 'em. Yes, its that good, dammit. Isomorphic Records. JM.

JAMES PLOTKIN/ALAN DUBIN - 2 x 7".

If you think **OLD** can get weird, than take a listen to what happens when two of the members branch out on their own. Plotkin, ever striving to manipulate his guitar to previously unachieved heights, yet again comes up with two pieces of totally off the wall sound. "I Am the Greaser" is the more palatable of the two, with its cyclical swirls and eventual deep, yet warbly drone. As always, I'm amazed that he extracted this from something as conventional as a guitar. What will this guy come up with next?? The answer to that lies on side two's "Kick to the Breadbasket", a fractured ear fucking of scrapes, frantic strums, piano like plinks, and a surreal, disembodied "ambience". Further proof that Plotkin has surpassed even one-time collaborator **KK Null** when it comes

to effectively disguising his *modus operandi*. Dubin, on the other hand isn't quite so innovative (or good for that matter), though he does find creative things to with vocals and some tapes. "Ayyee" comes off sounding like Null in one of his more aggravating moods, with a perforating, broken drill type noise, while the flip side is basically "muzak" amidst intrusions of strange (and I do mean strange) tears, and insistent "what the frig was that??" sounds. Comes packaged in a full-color, road-kill infested and vegetarian "gross-out" sleeve. *Speeding Across My Hemisphere* -- a division of Suggestion records. JM.

PUISSANCE - Let Us Lead CD.

Add **Puissance** to the list of CMI bands like **MZ. 412** and **Penitent**, whose ideology I don't really care for. After all, what to think of a band that sees fit to claim that the content of their record "is not to be confused with music or poetry since it is far beyond such artistic nonsense, and neither should it be compared to anything else since nothing can measure up to the true reflection of the end of time, life, and of course the world." Hmph, not really sure exactly what that means, but then, who really gives a shit and why is it even relevant to the music? Right off the bat I'm going to go against their wishes and compare this to **In Slaughter Natives**. While that might not be the case for the entire CD, on certain tracks, such as the opening "Burn the Earth", "Behold the Valiant Misanthropist", "To Reap the Bitter Crops of Hate", and "Global Deathrape", the comparison can be made easily, **Puissance** taking a similar nihilistic approach to classical music with heavy brass instrumentation, doomy martial percussion, and in the case of "Burn the Earth", a condemning and apocalyptic chorus of angelic voices. The **ISN** influence never completely disappears, but other tracks do reveal a more distinct **Puissance** sound. There's the softly stirring, passionate, and beautifully symphonic undertones of "Dance in the Sulphur Garden", the fiercely belligerent clash of dissonant orchestrations and driving battle-like percussion in "March of the Puissant", and the very proper, medieval-esk closer "Whirlpool of Flames", complete with kettle drum rhythms, and a pan flute accompaniment. I do have some definite complaints about the length of this CD (only 42 minutes!?!?) as well as what seems to be a lack of distinction and variation in moods throughout a lot of the songs, but otherwise, it's a fairly solid offering that's presented nicely in a digipack format with an embossed logo (though *only* for the first 4000 mind you?!?!), and a good bit better than what I would have predicted based upon their '95 *Krig* demo. Hardly the "best industrial album of '96" though, as claimed by Roger Karmanik himself. CMI. JM

RAISON D'ETRE - Within the Depths of Silence and Phormations CD.

Peter Andersson has basically been toying with the same formula for most of his three CDs, but the upside of that is that he's getting better and better with each release. *Within the Depths* continues in the same tradition as previous works, only expands on them in almost every aspect; the symphonic orchestrations are even more lavish, the ghostly atmospheres twice as

haunting, the moods as gorgeous and dark as you could ever hope or want them to be. Introspective pieces like "Ascent of the Blessed" and "Euphrosyne" (as featured on *And Even Wolves*) are incredibly moving, and limitless in their ability to awaken deep, spiritually stirring emotions with every listen. Their awesome beauty eclipsed only by their exudance of complete and utter melancholy. Other tracks, like "Inner Depths of Sadness", "Fall of the Damned," or "In Absence", seem to draw inspiration from a much murkier, more foreboding place. A place every bit as real, but not as brightly lit (ha, ha...any fans of *Tales From the Darkside* here?). Put together, *Within* is the pinnacle of an already illustrious career ...but I'll probably say that about his next release too! Cold Meat Industry. JM.

RAISON D'ETRE - Semblance CS.

Semblance, like Old Europa Cafe's *Conspectus*, is a collection of unreleased tracks, compilation appearances, and otherwise hard to find material from Peter Andersson. If you're a completist, you're probably already familiar with much of the second half of this tape as its mainly comprised of pieces taken from various Slaughter Production releases (*Death Odors*, *Ring of Isvarah*, and *From Sickness to Death*) as well as some more obscure labels from Portugal, Spain, and Japan. It's the first half then that you'll probably be most interested in, featuring unreleased pre-**Raison D'Et're** material stemming from 1989 and 1990 as well as two pieces from **Necrophorus** from 1991 and 1992. The early material is fairly crude frequency and radio manipulations/experiments with very little of the structure or compositional grace that you've come to expect from **Raison D'Et're**. Its also very short, with each piece averaging out to be about a minute in length. Interesting if only to hear the evolution that's taken place, but quite forgettable all the same. The **Necrophorus** material on the other hand, moves much closer in the direction of current **Raison D'Et're** (as well as **Atomine Elektrine**) material... introspective, refined orchestrations with just a slight touch of spirituality. Nothing to cry over if you miss it, but worth picking up if given the chance. Harmonie. JM.

RICHARD RAMIREZ - Deconstructed Hand Device CD.

This copy (subsequent copies have been packaged differently) of **RR's** debut CD came in a mauve paint-smeard

manila envelope, with what looks like the ripped, bloodied remnants of some murder victim's clothing shellacked to the back. Evidence enough of an unbalanced mind, you'd think, though real confirmation doesn't arrive until one actually samples the merchandise. 2 truly twisted blobs of sadistic swill span the better part of 62 minutes, and signify **RR's** much anticipated break into the digital age. Without so much as a mind-the-eardrums asshole, the shellacking kicks into gear: massive rips and writhing, relentless wriggles unload and implode with what can only be described as unparalleled brutality. Mostly midrange mind-fuck here, though a steady dose of crackling overamped high-end does manage to goose-step its way through the convulsive clamor. Ramirez is nothing if not a gentleman however. After 30 + minutes worth of follicular deconstruction, even the most durable ears could use a little sympathy. Blob the second yields precisely that: subdued bass tones and irregular percussive crunches echo deep in the decayed confines of a disused oil tanker....for a few minutes anyway. One can't just go around titling things "Unparalleled Brutality" without a certain degree of accountability. And so it comes as no surprise when Ramirez, ever the conscientious sort (especially when abused organs are involved), delivers: high end shrieking sirens and hissing squeals erupt, driving mercilessly toward a cloudless austerity of pure electronic molestation. "Unparalleled Brutality" continues this way for much of the duration, somewhat more palatable pleasures punctuated by renewed bursts of erratic, frenzied screeching, over and

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ISSUE #2

INTERVIEWS WITH: LUSTMORD •
MICK HARRIS • GLOD • TIMOTHY
RENNER • JERROLD RICHARDS

PLUS PART II OF NON-LETHAL WEAPONS.
CONSPIRACIES. WORLD WIDE NEWS. THE NATURE OF
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RAPOON - The Kirghiz Light 2CD.

No shortage of **Rapoon** floating around nowadays...which is fine, no complaints from me...that is, as long as he doesn't start flooding the market like a certain well known Mancunian (**Muslingauze** in case you don't). Disc one recalls the ethereal moments of *Raising Earthly Spirits* (**Rapoon's** finest work previous to this) ...airy and expansive atmospheres magically interwoven with freely evolving loops that add a sense of stability and/or structure and keep our bodies from drifting off into the clouds...though not necessarily our minds. Disc Two represents the side of **Rapoon** that's interested in more traditional, non-western style music... mostly middle eastern style percussion heavily looped into a trancey, hypnotic ragas. Though there are exceptions (mostly the tracks that sound like they belong on disc one), most of the 8 tracks simply become too repetitive to hold interest for any extended period of time. If you're like me, chances are you'll find yourself drawn back to disc one before disc two is even finished. Staalplaat/Soleilmoon. JM.

RED GNEIN SEXTET - Primitive Electric CS.

Red Gnein Sextet should be monsters in the noise genre...why they remain so virtually undiscovered, when others with less deserving talents continue to garner so much attention, is beyond me. All with due time I suppose, all with due time. In terms of sheer dense volume and power, few even approach this. The 12 pieces on here (each titled "Primitive Electric" but separated by respective numbers), bubble and churn like a fiery cauldron of white hot energy, thick chunky electronics roiling and tumbling like a stream of liquidous rock, steamy hisses of feedback vented from a thousand open fissures and tiny crevices. Like the music of **Daniel Menche**, it's considerably more intricate and composed than your standard half baked noise offering, probing the deeper, sub sonic depths of sound yet not afraid to round them out with infusions of softer, more gelatinous nuances....at times even venturing off into a fuzzy, swarming "ambience". Rhythm is not forgotten in all of this, and many of the pieces move forward with some sort of tangible, looping fury, rolling back onto themselves while striving to constantly stay ahead. Fans of **Menche**, **Söldnergeist**, and **Namanax**, will find this immensely appealing. Tantalus Recording Group. JM.

REPTILICUS - "O" CD.

I couldn't believe how much I disliked this disc when I heard it. What kills me is that there is a lot of great things going on in the album. Iceland's **Reptilicus** play superb dance oriented electronic music with amazing production qualities that don't sound artificial like all of those carbon copy techno acts. What makes it even better is their ability to use various elements of somewhat harsh overdriven noise and loop them within the mixes, giving the music an added dimension and making it very interesting yet not interfering with the dance-able feel, almost having a very **Coil**-esque approach without actually imitating.

So what's the problem? I want to know who encouraged these morons to take up singing because the awful vocals kill these great tracks beyond acceptable terms! As original yet artsy as the vocals may be, it just doesn't work, whatsoever. These guys make even **Current 93** look good! Then there's the beautiful digipack packaging which gives all sorts of mathematical equations and theories about the point at the center of a circle which contains the possibilities of all the future circles emanating from that point. You get the impression of how intelligent this trio is. But then, they have the nerve to go ahead and have song titles like "Song of the Beast", and "The Ooga Booga Factor", titles even the most juvenile black metal bands wouldn't use. And who really gives a fuck if this has Andrew McKenzie of the **Hafler Trio** playing on it? The only way I can recommend this is if you have some sort of voice eliminating karaoke device on your stereo. Otherwise, don't bother. Staalplaat. NE.

JORGE REYES - Mort Aux Vaches CD.

Jorge's disc is the second in a series done for Dutch public radio, following the superlative split CD with **Deutsch Nepal** and **In Slaughter Natives**. This shows a return to the darker, moodier realms that Jorge explored in some earlier (and select later) works and for all intents and purposes, it should be considered an excellent starting point for those unlucky enough to be unfamiliar with his often (but not always) astonishing work. The sound is fuller and considerably less dry and acoustic than the last Jorge release on Staalplaat, *The Flayed God*... more evocative and synth heavy, yet still very pure and wonderfully emotional. Jorge, sifting through the dark spiritual world and mythology of MesoAmerica, calls on the spirits of forgotten Gods and lost-cultures and resurrects them in a series of well conceived, atmospheric seances. The abundant percussion seems to be all struck by hand, giving it a natural, "realistic" sound, while the pastoral atmospheres flowing underneath work to take us out beyond the night sky and into a starry, dream-like state. Haunting vocal chants and moans, as well as nature samples and more indigenous instrumentation (rain sticks and flutes being the most decipherable and recognizable) help to furnish the CD in its more spiritual moments. In a CD devoid of low points, tracks that particularly stood out were the phenomenal "Cocijo", which for sheer eeriness has **Lustmord** beat by a mile, and the closing, nearly twenty minute, echo laden "Improvisation". Wow. An exceptional piece of work I couldn't possibly recommend any higher. Staalplaat. JM.

ROBERT RICH/B. LUSTMORD - Stalker CD.

The most anticipated release of the year, *Stalker* sees the bringing together of two of the most innovative musicians in the ambient genre, and the results are, not surprisingly, stunning. From the rumbling, forceful opening of "Elemental Trigger", the album flows seamlessly from one mood to another in a swirling cacophony of enveloping sound. It's ultimate aim, that of being a new soundtrack to the late Andrei Tarkovsky's epic 1979 film *Stalker*, succeeds in creating a bleak and oppressive visual

atmosphere, combining the soaring tones of Rich's synthesizers and woodwinds with **Lustmord's** trademark thunderous bass and other-worldly samples. While some sections point to a more experimental side of the artists, the album as a whole focuses on a stark, organic sound, not entirely indicative of either artist separately, but suggesting the creation of an artistic synergy. It goes without saying that this CD is an essential addition to the collector's inventory, whilst providing an impressive introduction to those unfamiliar with either musician. Fathom/Hearts of Space. BL.

RUNZELSTIRN AND GURGELSTOCK - Dein Mund So Rot CD.

(klank).....(bing).....(buzz).....(buzz)...An other curious release by the Swiss (bang) project of Rudolv (scrape) Eb.er (grind), **Runzelstirn & Gurgelstock**, with his usual blend of (tinkle) psychedelic edited music concrete madness (rattle) similar to say **NWW**, or **Brume**, but (clatter) more (babble) minimal, allowing plenty of silence to be (bonk) punctuated (wheeze) by (scronk) varying bursts of isolated sounds of (yell) interder(bing)minable origins that fly by from every direction, along with (squeal) interludes of accordions, pianos (beep), records, etc. A very disconcerting listening (clonk) experience, especially for your pets and neighbors(buzz)(honk)(creak).....(bang)..... Pure/RRRecords. PK.

SALT/PINEAL GLAND - Symptom 7's

Three 7"s in total (packaged identical to each other but numbered 30, 31, and 37), each handed out at collaborative gigs done by Stefan Alt and **Pineal Gland**. Real bruisers they are too....crushingly heavy distorted electronics that combine low end crunchiness with high end squelches to produce a driving, mechanically-rhythmic concoction bristling with staticy fuzz. In a stroke of brilliance, one of the sides from "Act 31" actually samples **Stone Glass Steel's** "Factory Mode" from *Industrial Icon*, combining the dark atmospherics of that song with a slew of abusive, frazzled frequencies and vocal bytes. Put all three 7"s together and you're close to actually having a full length album's worth of intense power electronics! Ant-Zen. JM.

SAPPHO'S FIST - Archeology and Airplanes CS.

If side one were all there was to this tape, I'd warn all but die-hard spoken word fans to steer clear. Several of the cuts fall into the trap of propping intentionally obscure words with music, sounding self-important and off-putting. The dark little gem "Fazoub" is a delightful exception, however, in which the music side of the **Sappho's Fist** equation, Frank Smith, experiments with various electronic percussion and guitar effects, fusing them into a gorgeously droned-drenched evocation of a sweaty Middle Eastern bazaar. Luckily for us, though, there is a lengthy second side (more than 30 minutes). This bears the last two parts of the tape's centerpiece, the three part "School of Velocity" chronicling the life, times, and importance of the world's most enigmatic aviatrix, Amelia Earhart. Although the first part suffers by its association with the first side,

sounding somewhat scattered and overdone, the rest of it is pure brilliance, words and music blended into an indispensable interpretation of the life-flight of a powerful woman. From her first baby-cries, treated here to rise above the common crowd like the song of a bird, just as the woman later did, Amelia was "beyond stardom; it was a strange continuum she and Lindbergh occupied; they were like Gods from outer space." But **Sappho's Fist** (Amy Kirk and Frank), in their sampling of documentaries, Amelia's words, Amy's words, and Franks dark electronics, never let us forget that Amelia was a strong woman who spoke out in favor of the technology that freed women from the drudgery of housework, but whose personal idiosyncrasies (disregard for learning Morse code, not being the best of pilots) and crushing popularity eventually dragged her under. Frank lists **Voice of Eye** and **Zoviet France** as two of his chief influences, and the drones, organic percussion, electronic blips, and other unidentified electronic wizardry (including a particularly unforgettable scraping - on-Styrofoam - cup sound) definitely betray his well-realized dark ambient ambitions. "The real mystery at the end is not the death of Amelia Earhart, but the woman herself." One comes away with the feeling that Amelia's disappearance was far from a tragedy, though. As Amy says in the concluding part of the tape, "We cut the wires, falling. Its not about height." It's about setting our own standards as high or as low as we choose, and soaring unbound through limitless skies, be they blue or brooding grey. *Archeology and Airplanes* is available for \$6ppd (US) or \$8ppd (world) from Frank

Smith, 10 Pearson Ave., #3, Somerville MA. 02144-2306. E-mail: fsmith2@bu.edu. Tape trades OK. DA.

SATORI - Invisible Rhythm CD.

Combining the tribal rhythms of flute and drum with organic ambient textures, **Satori** (not to be confused with the power electronics outfit of the same name) creates a musical tapestry into which is woven the magical tale of a spiritual odyssey. Reference points include **Voice of Eye**, **Jorge Reyes**, and **O Yuki Conjugate**, but **Satori** has a sound and healing power uniquely their own. Against a backdrop of warm synth drones, the album opens with reverent flute and ritual drumming. In the warmth of the firelit clearing, the tribe gathers for the ceremony. Bare feet entwine tapping toes with Mother Earth; twisting tendril fingers touch Father Sky - all beneath the watchful eyes of the ageless stars. The Ancient Ones lining the clearing join the Gathering then, liquid green earth-fire pounding in their tree-veins. Darkness roils around the edges of the group, but the dancers take this in stride, knowing that without darkness there can be no light. As the liquid drums rise higher and higher, seemingly past the sky, the flute sings like birds on the breeze. Gypsy violins and grating voices swirl by, water flows past, a funky rock beat comes and goes. But the flute-soul continues undaunted, confident in the knowledge that constant change brings continuity and serenity. With these thoughts the journey turns inward, and the music becomes meditative, with warm electronic washes of sound. Faces of the ancestors appear in the thick smoke as the

dancers circle, voices on the night breezes speaking wordlessly of the primal source, the dream of life. For a time, the soul becomes saddened, thinking of the deaths of these rich spirits, of the loneliness of its own life-journey. Steady rain and thunder punctuate these dark musings, interlaced with melancholy reminiscences. Meanwhile, organics and electronics exchange ascendancy in a brilliant mirroring of the dreamer moving in and out of the consciousness. Slowly the rain fades, and the colors behind the clouds are revealed, melting and reforming in shades less seen than felt resonating in one's heart. Troubled thoughts recede as the tides of gentle Ocean roll in, sea breeze blows clean through sweat-soaked hair, and the spirit is strengthened, renewed. Ready for the next journey, which begins even as this one ends. Highly, highly recommended (with the exception of one irritatingly space-y New Age-y track, "Temple Sleep". Ancient Sun Music, PO Box 721257, Norman OK, 73070 Satori@well.com or Stramp1@aol.com. DA.

PAUL SCHUTZE/VOICE OF EYE/ROBERT RICH - Narratives: Music For Fiction CD.

Whereas a lot of experimental ambient is based on the ideas of providing mental soundtracks for non-existent films, *Narratives: Music For Fiction* is a brilliant concept based on different, high quality composers setting original music to their favorite pieces of fiction. The three composers chosen for this first outing, **Paul Schutze**, **Voice of Eye**, and **Robert Rich**, says it all and you honestly can't get much better. But what helps the concept work so well is how the CD liner notes contain excerpts from the

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novels each composer chose, putting you in a better frame of mind for being able to interpret the music based on what you have read from each excerpt. **Paul Schutze** composed "Seribu Aso" based on the story 'Kalimantan' by Lucius Shepard, it's eight minutes of poisonous tingling sensations derived from heat sickness. Floating hallucinations of holy elongated light pulsation's that vertically stretch out amidst a feverishly encapsulating desert loneliness, which for some reason comes off as being very beautiful in it's ominous yet exotic sun soaked, sound ripple hypnotism. **Voice of Eye's** interpretation of 'Siddhartha' by Herman Hesse is the highlight of the whole disc. A twenty six minute journey based on one of the ultimate books of pure spirituality in literature, it's also a book that has meant a lot to me for more than a decade now. Based on Siddhartha's spiritual journey through the art of listening, the track starts off with slow engulfing drifts of sound which carry an almost tangible heaviness, rich in texture within it's mind penetrating precision, building up into literal tidal waves of mind expanding sound vibrations. The second part revolves around the fact that what once was recognizable is only a faint sound memory, yet everything seems to sound like everything else, with a slowly erupting frenzy of voice snippets interwoven in an endless array of ways yet fully whole as one elevating chaotic voice. It then drops into the third part of the track, a lovely ambient piece with a nice touch of ethnic tribal percussion, a realization of how all sounds and voices come from the same source. An absolutely pure humming derived from the innermost part of the human spirit, absorbed in one self yet absorbed in everything else, that great perfection of sound which is OM! **Robert Rich** has spent many years taking his listeners on long contemplative journeys through sound, so it's only fitting that he does an interpretation of 'Starmaker' by Olaf Stapledon. A long piece of cosmic travel through analog soundwaves, thoughts of the creation of time, the origins of life and the birth of humanity, and the existence of parallel universes pulsate through your head as the thick drones of sound regenerate into your bloodstream to create a perfectly circulating numbness through your entire body. *Narratives* is literally a perfect album that can't be recommended enough. I just hope Manifold continues to release more editions in the future, because the amount of amazing work that would come out of such a concept is limitless. Manifold. NE.

S-CORE - My Candle Has Died LP

Yet another slab of attractively packaged wax (no pun intended) that, due to its limited production (a whopping 285 copies to be exact), you'll have a hell of a time trying to find. But hey, that's not really my concern now is it? I just review the shit, not release it, so don't blame me! The product in question? S-Core's first full length LP, courtesy of the always impressive Praxis Dr. Bearmann. Even with eleven years of existence behind them S-Core has only begun to hit their stride, and this LP is a good, accurate representation of their recognizably unique sound. Constructed mainly around a complex series of loops S-Core's music is both beautiful and ugly hypnotic and lulling on one hand, dirgey and purely

industrial on the other. Close your eyes and your whisked away into some barren, but still functional factory landscape: things churn, hum, and whirr, steam is unleashed to release building pressure, metal scrapes upon metal, fiery hot steel is doused in a pool of cooling liquid.....layer upon layer added until the whole thing is gyrating in some off kilter, mesmerizing pattern. With each passing listen my respect for this work increases.....now, if you can only find it. Praxis Dr. Bearmann. JM.

S-CORE - Finger Mark 7".

Not so much droney (this is Drone Records after all) as it is hypnotically mesmerizing ... a mixture of lulling, repetitious loops on the bottom level with more abrasive, industrial sounds gently roaring overhead. It's a kind of deep, extremely complex style of ambient meets noise, full of hidden subtleties and dissolving nuances and I'm beginning to pick it out as S-Core's trademark sound. Very easy to get lost in, even at this short of a length. Drone Records. JM.

S-CORE - Tarnish 7".

S-Core, along with **Contagious Orgasm**, remain one of the only Japanese bands that actually fits well somewhere within the European (power) electronics scene. Its no wonder then, that European based labels seemed to have caught onto what they are doing (Tesco, Ant-Zen, and Old Europa Cafe with **Contagious Orgasm**, God Factory, Praxis Dr. Bearmann, and now Drahtfunk Product with S-Core). *Tarnish* is the first release from Drahtfunk, the label of Klaus Jochim of **Telepherique** fame, and its a promising debut. As the name implies, *Tarnish* is comprised of 4 tracks with titles referring to things either tainted or soiled in some manner: "Flaw", "Uncleanliness", "Rust", and "Stain". The music is fittingly dirgey and "dirty"... brooding atmospheres that unfold slowly, punctuated with rhythmic elements and more shadowed and mysterious textural noises. A nice addition to your collection that you'll be proud to show to your friends. Drahtfunk Product. D.F.P. - available via Drone Records. JM.

SCORN - Gyrall CD.

With the departure of Nicholas Bullen, Gyrall sees **Scorn** as a sole outlet for Harris' creativity. Without the assistance of his ex-colleague, Harris falls back into a introverted shell. The catchy bass hooks and subtle intricacies of *Evanescence* are replaced by slower, deeper, and more minimalistic (albeit somewhat boring) grooves, the beats still an integral part of the sound, but fragmented and, as in "Far in Out" or "Black Box", even sloppy and seemingly thrown together. Harris remains a master of his trade though, and the overall strengths of this record outweigh its flaws. The **Scorn** of new is a darker **Scorn**, with Harris seeking inspiration from the recesses of his mind rather than outside forces...you'll find no vocals here and none of the blatant sampling that comprised previous efforts...simply pure expression from someone trapped deep within the confines of his imagination. Earache. JM.

SECHRES MOUND - D2 740m 440 CS

This may hardly be worth reviewing since there were only 80 copies produced...but it's one of those that you'll want to search out until you find it. The sounds on here are thunderously "big", expansive, and monstrous. Broken down into relatively short movements (average track length hovering around the 4 minute mark), it's music from the most fathomless, darkest of chasms -- pipes, wires, and percussion so heavily reverberated they're turned into a beast of immeasurable proportions. Reminiscent of several things (**Alan Lamb**, **A.B.G.S.**, a dash of **Photophobia**), but ultimately comparable to nothing. Absurdly good. \$8.00ppd USD from Cynistrose: 5, Impasse Des Moineaux, 87100 Limoges, France. JM.

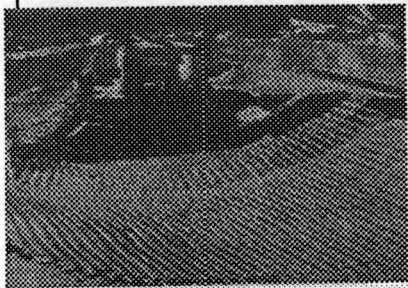
SEEDMOUTH - Various Artists CD

Even if the rest of the line-up sucked on this new compilation, I still would have bought it just to hear **Inade** on CD for once! It's a great track too (this band does not disappoint!) , doomy and cold, with an ominous, **Predominance**-like voice repeating "Gihad Khor" (the name of the track) over shifting and expansive washes of spacious dark ambience and a lethargically collapsing 'clang'. In a similar but brighter and more surreal vein, is an outstanding intro piece from **Deutsch Nepal** entitled "Surgery", in which a sturdy, rhythmic loop is invaded by voices and a series of fluttering, insectile noises. As for the remaining highlights on *Seedmouth*, well, there's quite a few and the above represent only the tip of the iceberg. In "The Most Familiar Enemy" we find **IOS** harking back to the earlier, more inspiring days of *In 70 Countries or Historical* with an **Organum** style drone that's subtle and minimalistic, but very threatening and unnerving, much like what you'll find on "Historical Pt. II". This track, coupled with the track that's on **Manifold's Guru Means Slayer of Darkness** shows Dan's definitely still got it in him, and we can only hope it's reflective of a broader return to form. **John Watermann's** "A Bewildering Number of Brides" is a series of well placed, incidental noises (whirrs, clicks, and alien buzzes), unknown **Mikhail Atom's** "N2" a completely spaced out journey full of angelic synth voices and glassy atmospheres, and **Band of Pain's** "Bluebell Hill" a well done piece of subtle orchestrated darkness, not all that dissimilar to what a more organic infused **Caal** may sound like! Only **Inanna's** uneventful study in Artic minimalism, **E.A.R.'s** playfully surreal 'noodlings', and **Cranioclast's** slightly dub-like rhythm and off kilter bleeps and bleeps, failed too excite or just seemed out of place, but none even come close to ranking on the stink-o-meter. For a closer, **Lustmord** clocks in with a whopper...a highly charged, shape shifting piece with a multitude of swirling dynamics ...thunderous lows and expansive, climatic highs spiraling off into (or coming out of) a deep space void. Funny, maybe he's been listening to **Yen Pox** for some tips (heh, heh). A great compilation. Cold Spring. JM.

S.E.T.I. - Knowledge CD.

Named after an organization (Search for Extra-Terrestrial Intelligence) founded by Carl Sagan and Ferank Drake, S.E.T.I. is the brain child of Lagowski, previously known for works under his own name, as well as under **Legion**,

NARRATIVES: Music For Fiction

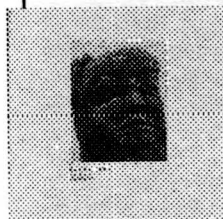


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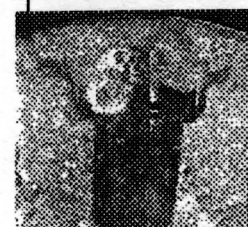


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and a collaboration with Lustmord (the rather wretched *Terror Against Terror*). As you might have guessed, its another in a chain of releases (*Arecibo* being the most recognizable) drawing its inspiration from deep space and utilizing wide band/satellite scanners as its main harvester of sound. As such, the music is suitably cold and quite soulless, reaching far out into the barren void of space and amplifying the ever-present, alien sounds. As evident in these recordings, there's not a whole lot going on out there, but Lagowski does a commendable enough job of bringing what's been accumulated together and fusing it with some of his own, synthesized atmospheres. These are works that evolve really quite slowly (too slowly perhaps), emanating from some far off vacuum where time is of no meaning. Typically, I'd say I enjoy getting lost in such an expanse of sound, but I found this to be a bit too minimalistic and uneventful to hold my attention. Plenty of nice sounds within the four pieces presented -- robotic, digitalized voices, strange "subterranean" gurgles -- just not enough variation to successfully separate them from each other. Space can be a pretty boring place....hasn't anyone figured that out yet? Ash International/Soleilmoon. JM.

SHINJUKU FILTH - Junk CD.

A far cry from the stylized, romantic orchestrations of present-era *Shinjuku Thief*, it's side-kick and alter-ego *Shinjuku Filth* is a dizzying, adrenalized, and fast paced clashing of styles -- fractured techno with insistent, jackhammer beats, tumultuous and highly digitalized cyber-mayhem, frenzied movie samples (*Blue Velvet* and *Exorcist III* par example), and an undercurrent of symphonic drama. It's Darrin Verhagen flushed out of the gloomy middle ages and on 20th century overload! At times, this gets a bit too sterilized and too programmed, but it all moves by so fast that you'll hardly have time to assimilate what may have just passed you by. Only the last three pieces, "Obsidious", "Log Cabin Fever" and "17/21" slow things down to a composure collecting speed ... finally allowing time to smooth down your hair and wipe those beads of perspiration of your forehead. As a repercussion to those of us yearning for something darker and more atmospheric, the last six or so minutes are dedicated to a haunting piece of sullen and bleak ambience. A side to Darrin you won't find on a *Shinjuku Thief* recording (thankfully I suppose), but not a bad one all the same. Peril 305. JM.

SHINJUKU THIEF - The Witch Hunter CD.

Dorobo likes to describe this as "not as gloom or doom as its predecessor," (that being the *Witch Hammer*) "... a few shafts of light get through the clouds". Shreds of hopefulness are indeed intertwined here, but the clouds still remain thick, and rooters for the darkside will still find plenty to like in all of this. It is a forthrightly quieter release however, lacking much of the tension or suspense that dominated the *Witch Hammer*, while managing to retain many of the bleak, expressionistic elements. Among the sturm und drang chordal blasts and winding melodic lines full of pathos and drama, there are also passages of lyrical, almost courtly restraint. The stirring violin sections are, as

always, richly scored, yet more mid paced and poetic, garnering sympathy not for the hunters, but for the hunted. If there's a climax, it arrives near the end in track 8, "Smoke and Ice", and track 10, "Berserkir". In "Smoke and Ice" ominous strings continuously spiral downward towards the witches coven, a panoply of keyboard sounds and scrapes then used to evoke images of poisonous kettle brews and devilish concoctions. The hunt is on in "Berserkir" as frantic midi-horns pound in an exaggerated theatrical fashion....recalling some of the more bombastic passages of *The Witch Hammer*. The title track, despite being the second to last piece, gives the disc a sense of closure. But being the pessimist that I am, its overt brightness exudes a lighthearted ending I'd prefer not to have. Dorobo. JM.

SLAUGHTER AGE '95 - Various Artists CS.

Those not content with just *Exploration One* in their system will certainly want to get a heavy dosage of *Slaughter Age '95*. Slaughter is not afraid of compilations, and like previous offerings *Death Odors* or *Beating the Meat*, *Slaughter Age* brings together some of the more celebrated artists working in the field of what has come to be called (mostly due to Slaughter) "death-industrial". From the methodical cold rhythms of *Megaptera*, to the shooting "wet" electrodes of *Atrax Morgue*, to the saturating sadistic noise of *Murder Corporation*, *Slaughter Age '95* is a compilation that revels in the art of murder, butchery, and the perverse depths of the human psyche. Only rather weak offerings from *Fatal Impact*, *PWCCA Demogorgon*, and *Contagious Orgasm* stray from the furtive apple tree, but they are soon forgotten in lew of strong pieces from *Stratvm Terror*, *Advokat Ihrer Hoheit*, *Die Sonne Satan*, and *Drape Excrement*, among others. I can't say much for the overall recording quality...which seems muddled and frustratingly low in the mix, but its a rather solid comp (certainly much better than *Extreme Pleasures Vol II*) for those willing to rollick in the sickness. To the slaughter! Comes nicely packaged in a video box. Slaughter Productions. JM.

SMELL AND QUIM - Diameter of Elvis' Colon CD.

Having a good time trying to imagine the packaging S & Q would have come up with had this been released on Stinky Horse Fuck as opposed to the generic cardboard sleeve that all Pure releases come in (which is fine, it's cheap that way). Ironically enough though, the tamest S&Q packaging you've seen actually houses their harshest musically. I've never heard 'em so fucking noisy! Sadly, in the process they've forgone much of what's made 'em interesting over the years...the first half of *Diameter* just too darn one dimensional -- nothing much more than interruptions in a field of white noise, with only the occasional bodily function or gargled sound allowed to filter in. Latter parts of this CD however, reeled me in as they show a definite return to form...lots of broken "skidderings", squiggles, feedback screeches and varying textures within the wall of sound. A planets length away from being their best work, but for the price...palatable. Pure. JM.

SMELL AND QUIM/MACRONYMPHA - Transsexual 7".

A rare release that actually stands up to the extreme packaging that houses it! And visually extreme it is... stretching the boundary of good taste about as far as it can go, then stretching it even more. The packaging in question...chicks with dicks! What else would you expect when **Smell and Quim** and **Macronympha** get together and name their release *Transsexual*? These are hardly regular, genetically made penises pictured here either ...no, these are often mangled, misshapen, doctor made dicks (or maybe genetic goofs), constructed how, I have no idea. I mean, dicks are pretty freaking ugly creations to begin with, let alone ones that dangle below a pair of 32 C's! All this is included in the multi-page booklet that comes with the slab of vinyl, and if you can appreciate the humor in it all you'll get a real kick out of it. If not, well, tough shit. Anyways...the music plays second fiddle really, but if you must know...**Smell and Quims** "Cunt Morphology" sounds like it was recorded in the same session as last issue's "Vaginal Clackers Will Drive You Clackers" (do I detect a theme here?) ...with the same lurching quality and hissy fits of clamorous noise. **Macronympha's** "Fem-Gland" is considerably more biting...an anal shredder that's viscusously raw and a suitable soundtrack for the accompanying images. A joint Mother Savage/Stinky Horse Fuck release. JM.

SMELL & QUIM / ONONMATOPOEIA - Fanny Batter CD.

Two of England's more boisterous noise groups square off against each other and the result, quite naturally, is pretty damn ugly (in a mostly positive way). Not a split, but a collaboration between the two that sees the bands respectively working over each others material in (mainly) 2 lengthy tracks. Its a journey into the severely deranged, sex drenched minds of the perpetrators where things go bump in the torture chamber and erotic games get dangerously out of hand. The S/M pictures that adorn the cover makes me think these guys actually have sex to this kind of music, and that's a scary thought indeed. I pity the women forced to be on the receiving end of whatever it is they dish out! As it stands, the only abuse we the listeners are forced to withstand is to our auditory system....abuse enough I suppose. "Appeasing The Great Porn God" starts things off on a suitably nasty note, as **S & Q** tackle a submission from **Onomatopoeia**. Impossible to tell who contributed what...suffice to say its a hideously unstructured piece of abusive noise, the majority of which is comprised of heavy, reverberating clangs, soft squelches of feedback, general clutter, antagonistic guitar discharges and a periodic vocal outburst. Much like **S & Q** themselves, vulgar, but not without it's charm. **Onomatopoeia** returns the favor on "Symphony in Labia Minor", and the result is considerably kinder on the ears. In fact, with its emphasis on loops and mesmerizing, organic sounding drones it could easily pass for the work of **Zoviet France** (and good Z.F. at that)! One could argue that the it may seem out of place in lew of what came before it, but its a strong enough piece that, quite frankly my dear, I don't give a damn. The booklet itself lists

only these two tracks, but the CD itself plays two additional tracks -- the first of which clocks in at a little under three minutes and comes off sounding like a cross between "Appeasing" and "Symphony". Sort of. Actually, I'm at a loss as to how to describe it, but that's not the first time that's happened and won't be the last. As proof of that, the second of these "bonus" (?) tracks (approx. 7 minutes long) again has me stumped as to how to describe it accurately: real chaotic, inharmonious mixture of sounds...some definite guitar exploitation but otherwise indecipherable in terms of instrumentation. Outright strange, but then that shouldn't come as too much of a surprise, now should it? By the way, what the hell is a "fanny batter" anyway??? A joint Stinky Horse Fuck/Cheeses International Production for Cheeses Int'l. JM.

SOCIAL INTERIORS - The World Behind You CD.

Drip. Drip. Drip. Burble. Burble. Wahoahaw. Flush. Drip. Drip. Picture that going on for fifteen minutes (the title track, "The World Behind You") and you'll get a pretty good idea of what its like to sit through this CD, composed mainly of found or borrowed urban and environmental sounds stitched into a not so coherent whole. Kind of boring, unless you've always had a burning desire to eavesdrop on the private life of your plumbing. As with most musical collage projects, some sounds have more potential for extended exploration and manipulation than others, and I'm not sure **Social Interiors** picked the most interesting sounds to explore for this project. It would also help if the disc had some sort of central organizing theme, or at least were all connected into one or two tracks like a **Nurse With Wound** album. Unfortunately, we have eight separate tracks totaling about sixty minutes, most of which has no direction at all. This is not to say, of course, that the disc has no interesting moments. I very much enjoyed "Intrusions (due to inclement weather)" which explored the course of a thunderstorm, through thunder warped into a true tearing open of the heavens, birdsong twisted into a baby's cries, woodpeckers, then calm after the storm. The slightly ominous "Modern Sleep," with its dark ambient textures and dimly heard sleep-voices, also rose above the rest of the album, as did the wind, water, chimes, and animal noises of "Shape of the Hunter." Overall though, the disparate bits amalgamated to make *The World Behind You* are too random and disorganized to form a coherent or particularly interesting whole. According to the presskit, **Social Interiors** started back in 1984 by injecting bits of found sound into radio commentaries. With that sort of context to guide its sonic thrill seeking, this CD would have worked well. Unfortunately, such a guiding light was lacking, and it just comes off sounding scattered. Extreme. DA.

SPASTIC COLON - Premature Release CS.

Not the seizure inducing fits of noise you'd expect to come from a band called **Spastic Colon**, but rather dark, surrealistic, experimental atmospheres comprised of guitar manipulations, electronics, and a metal detector (yup, a first as far as I know). With it's factory drones, eery guitar scrapes, atonal intrusions,

and enveloping sometimes spacey swirls, **Spastic Colon** can be an unnerving and sometimes compelling listen, and there's plenty of highlights within it's 60 minute run (particularly the mind bending "Skatolic Atmosphere"). But, it also can get quite minimalistic and long winded (as in the first track, the 10 minute "Inflammatory"), and the listener may quickly wonder where it is **Spastic Colon** intends to go with it all. And another gripe....though clearly and cleanly produced, the 'lighter', higher pitched sounds seem hollow and thin and contain a sort of brittle, abrasive edge that doesn't compliment the deeper, more intriguing aspects of the cassette. Things get even worse on side two, when they include a 22 minute live piece of poorly recorded erratic, improvised cacophony. Now this is what you'd expect from a band called **Spastic Colon**! At any rate, they do manage to redeem themselves by dedicating the last track to the throbbing, spacey warbles of the metal detector (I'm assuming that's what it is). It's a totally cool sound that makes me think of some bad Sci-Fi movie, or a lost episode of *The Outer Limits*, where a fleet of tiny U.F.O.s descend upon a small town and begin to eradicate the residents. Comes packaged in a cool balsa wood box. Pinch a Loaf. JM.

STATICS - Various Artists CD.

A compilation of stark beauty that's full of spellbinding delicacies and hidden delights from the likes of **Darrin Verhagen**, **Paul Schutze**, **Alan Lamb**, **Jim O'Rourke**, **Ryoji Ikeda**, **Kazuhiko Kinami**, and others. Deftly compiled and carefully arranged, the tones and frequencies glide by on seamless rivers. On the outside, things appear to be quite minimalistic, but further concentrated listenings reveal a hidden world of activity... constant shifts in mood and texture advancing in slow motion time frames. Its not until **David Toop's** "Iron Perm", the ninth track of ten, that we are confronted with something more jarring, as discordant guitar notes rouse us from the meditative state we've lapsed into. I actually found myself a bit annoyed by the rather rude awakening, but **Lagowski** and **Toru Yamanaka** calmed me back down with an exceptional offering of creepy, glacial atmospheres. Probably my favorite compilation released in the last year or so that should be required listening for all labels thinking of releasing yet another comp. This is how its done! CCI Recordings. JM.

MICHAEL STERNS - The Light in the Trees 3" CD.

On this 20-minute, 4-song 3" CD, Michael Sterns mixes atmospheric ambient recordings with studio work (electronic and organic) to create a beautiful mini-portrait of a day in the life of a forest. From the contemplative, spiritual drones and birdsong of the dawning "Light in the Trees" to the slowly building cacophony of voices (electronic, crow, and human) of "The Gathering," and from the nightbird and insect symphony framed by the dark, deep-voiced bells of "The Path Between" leading to the next day, Sterns guides his listeners on a wondrous journey, showing us the natural world we see every day into a magical

new light. Amplexus -- available from Projekt. DA.

STIGMA - Structures of Chaos 7".

I heard horrible things about *Stigma's* performance at the Deadly Actions II Festival in France, but hey, I wasn't there and I've been pretty impressed with what they have to offer on the studio end of things, particularly for Ant-Zen. *Structures* sees *Stigma* being less derivative of *Dive* and beginning to find more of their own sound. The heavy, repetitive beat is still dominate on side A's "Lethal Radiations", but its enveloped in some beautifully somber, almost orchestral atmospheres. Quite exceptional really. "Structures of Chaos" diligently follows and ups the ante with some highly processed, stomps of percussion and interruptions of soft feedback squeals. This is bludgeon heavy stuff that would have even Dirk Ivens drooling in appreciation and awe! No beats at all on side B's "Untitled", instead the focus is on agitation through more refined means; swarming insectile buzzes and slow, low end rumbles that sew *Structures of Chaos* up with a perfect stitch. Yummy...I'm hungry for more. Ant-Zen. JM.

STIN SCATZOR - Industro 7".

Ahem...um, I don't think I like this. I wanted to...but the vocals, which sound like something akin to Dirk Ivens with a sore throat and no processing, really did it in for me. Aside from that, well, I still don't like it much. Certain sectors of the Belgian electronics scene seem to have a hard time escaping from under the shadows of mid-era *Klinik*, and *Stin Scatzor* certainly fall into that category. I love Ant-Zen, but this just don't cut it. Ant-Zen. JM.

STRATOSPHERE - The Introspective Spaces 3" CD.

Like all the Amplexus' CD's I've encountered, this one's impressively packaged in a special oversized fold out sleeve, graced with some beautifully textured nature and Earth based photography. Produced by none other than *Vidna Obmana*, the mood more so than the music itself, bear a striking similarity; a comparable sense of serenity and calm overtakes the body and mind as warm, celestial tones seem to descend from breaks in the clouds and consume every corner of your chosen listening environment. It's a very calming style of ambience emotive and soothing, slowly evolving and subtle, yet never passive or "wall papy". File next to your *Vidna* and *Greinke* CDs, but be sure you leave enough space in between for easy access. Amplexus...available from Projekt. JM.

STRATVM TERROR - Pariah Demise CD.

Ah, finally...this is one I've been waiting for, the first CD from Peter Andersson (*Raison D'Etre*) as his angrier and darker alter ego *Stratvm Terror*. You'll find very little of the lush, melancholy beauty of *Raison* and other side projects on this. Instead, *Stratvm Terror* occupies a similar chilly and soulless realm explored by early *MZ. 412* with cold, echoey atmospheres, harsh keyboard discharges, and steely, mechanized, doom filled percussion. It's a good bit more chaotic than early *MZ.* though ... more animated, varied, and frantic, flowing

from ambience to hammering rhythms with the ingenious ease we've come to expect from Andersson. Much like the *Germinal Chamber* cassette reviewed last issue, *Pariah Demise* bristles with the dark, rabid, and claustrophobic energy of a fever induced, hallucinogenic nightmare. Visions of atrocities play over and over again as your thoughts are held hostage in a sweaty vice-like-grip. Samples also make brief appearances as do the tormented, indecipherable vocals supplied by someone simply noted as T.L....obviously Andersson's chosen partner in crime for this outing. Not only the best thing C.M.I. never released, but one of the best things I've heard this year. Comes packaged in a red sheath with a cartoon depiction of a medieval beheading....kind of cheesy, but easy to overlook. Old Europa Cafe. JM.

SYNASCAPE - Synascape CD.

A case of when its good its real good and when its bad its downright awful. Fortunately, the latter outweighs the former by quite a substantial margin. Framed between two superbly dark atmospheric pieces, you'll find 10 tracks of rhythmic electro-industrial, some of which succeeds, some of which, obviously, does not. The material that does succeed does so because of the skillful incorporation of mechanized samples and strangely disorienting resonances, that help propel this far away from the normal drib and drab typically associated with the electro-industrial genre. If the rhythm doesn't come from heavy beats, it comes from loops, both of which can be nicely constructed and well done, but also a bit too repetitive to stand up to further listens. Still, a track like "No Fright", with its frantic pelts of percussion and spacey, surrealistic nuances is the perfect marriage of noise and rhythm and I haven't heard it done much more effectively. Likewise, its successors "Inner Strategy" and "Schutz" are spectacular, doubling the intensity with ferocious attacks of raw, sharply edged noise and metallic screeches. Jeez, a whole CD of this type of stuff and I'd be out of my freaking clothes, trying to make love to the hole in the middle of the disc! Bringing all this down is the integration of beat-heavy, sterilized dribble like "Fiendish," "My Race," and the outright strange "My Turn,". The latter is populated with the voices of children, some of which are manipulated to sound something very close to "cookie puss" -- an annoying sound indeed for anyone familiar with what was undoubtedly one of the cheesiest commercials ever to grace the tube. A shame really, 'cause the majority of the material is worth a gander. Oh well, I'll let you decide. Ant-Zen. JM.

TAINT - Indecent Liberties LP.

I've seen it all now...whatever comes after this, from *Taint* or anybody else for that matter, will be nothing but old hat. Packaged in a wire mesh (with damn pointy edges too) and splattered with a liberal dose of cat and dog blood (yes, its most definitely real and no I don't know how they went about getting it)...this goes beyond extreme and beyond shocking. Numbing might be a good word....but only to the jaded. Others will only be repulsed. Before you even put on this slab, take a minute to thumb through the accompanying booklet to help prepare yourself. Sick photos, twisted as fuck drawings courtesy

of Trevor Brown, and small bits of insane literature will get you in the suitable mood. Now, if torture, pedophilia, rape, and murder sounds like your kind of thing, well you should probably seek help first, and then venture into the realms of depravity that is *Indecent Liberties*. A veritable orgy of overloaded electronics, this is probably less intense then you might expect going on the packaging alone. That's not say its not extreme...but I actually find this fairly palatable. Noisy yes, but owing perhaps more to the European power electronics scene with its heavy pulsations and dense "wet" electrode waves, than to the Japanese noise one. Manipulated and looped samples ("Tie 'em up, take 'em out" for instance) are incorporated into the screeches of feedback and general mayhem, heightening the feelings of sickness that rise from your gut. Hold back that bile man! The auditory equivalent of watching a snuff film....on a certain primordial level you enjoy it, but somehow you can't help but feel you best wash your hands afterwards. Still want it? May be after the fact since there were only 199 copies made, but some scrounging around may find you a copy -- expect to pay for it though. Praxis Dr. Bearmann. JM.

TAINT - Victimology CS.

Packaging that, for all intents and purposes exceeds the limits of good taste, *Victimology* comes wrapped in wire with a folded up guide from the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, and a rusty razor blade sneakily glued to the j-card (watch those thumbs, this could get serious!). It's the kind of perverted and sick shit *Taint's* known for and it demands the question, how far is too far?? Taking a cue from *Buyer's Market*, *Taint* adds sound bite testimonies between tracks of thick, punishing noise and power electronics: victims that survived, grieving families of murder victims bemoaning the loss of their loved ones...cries of "why, why?" being among the more common of sentiments. Shock tactics fail to have much effect on me anymore, but even the most jaded will have a hard time not being affected by this one way or another. Just be glad you don't live next to the guy! 100 copies produced. PO Box 7150 Waco, TX. 76714. JM.

TEMPLEGARDEN'S - OV 7".

A beautiful 7" and unquestionably one of the best things Ant-Zen's released to date. "Halls ov Maria" begins with a calming almost circular drone that is soon walled in by indecipherable voices and an escalation of tonal intensity. By tracks end, clammering tribal drums (reminiscent of *Allerseelen*) and echoey, warbling knells have worked their way to the forefront, only to fade back out into a black eternity. "Middangearde" is just plain frightening....a wonderful convergence of dark incantations spoken over heavily reverbed screeches and chilling metallic howls. Really quite haunting and a mandatory purchase for fans of *Aghast.* and C.M.I. in general. Ant-Zen. JM.

TESENDALO - Natur Naht LP.

Tesendalo entered my world via the fantastic *Entwurf 7"* released last year by Drone Records. *Natur Naht*, which is their second full-length

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LP, features what has come to be their trademark sound: looping, ambient, drone-music which, in this case, has been divided into three different sections. Part 1 is slow and looming, while part 2 is more open and atmospheric. Part 3 reminds me quite a bit of mid-period **Zoviet France** and I guess the comparison is inevitable., especially since the record comes in an organic handmade cover, prepared for some bullrush-like material that looks like the siding of a grass hut. There's only 444 of these, so if you're inclined, you might wanna scoot. Noise Museum. JS.

THIRD ORGAN/DIESEL GUITARS - Osaka Noise 7"

Rising Suns of Osaka noisedom offer introductory samplings from two major schools of Japanese noise: one side harsh power electronica, one side more "ambient" improvised guitar spasm. I shouldn't have to tell you whom is whom, but for you **BIG DUMMIES** let us start with the harsh stuff. Like most splits involving Osaka's most impressive noisester, *Osaka Noise* is easily worth picking up for the **Thirdorgan** half. "Futerdestroyer" sounds a bit like transitional-era **Thirdorgan**, during which Akihiro "The Surgeon" Shimizu spent his days waffling between irrepressibly brutal masses of pure earscorch and the more exquisitely pristine splicings and sweetly sadistic incisions he has been administering of late. No date to confirm this, but in my defense, the **Diesel Guitar** track is date-stamped April 5, 1995. As for **DG**, to feign honesty, my feelings for their shit have proven inconsistent at best -- about as inconsistent as Mr. Youki's direction. Maybe it's that inexplicable fondness so many Japonoisers have for psychedelic insemination -- even, and increasingly, the harsher brethren. For better or worse, and I expect Japan's harshheads to know better, the psychedelia-fetish thing is definitely on the upswing in the Kingdom of Noise. Luckily, at least where the noiseheads are concerned, nothing spacey blights this particular Diesel-powered sucker: nice and grubby, steady and grating, guitar dirge-spew. It's all therapeutic actually. Recommended noise-head dosage: 3 **Thirdorgan** earhole blowouts to 1 **Diesel Guitar** gurgle-grind. Let **DG** be your pleasantly crushing soundtrack to aural recuperation. Then blow the buggers out again. More tinitus conscious are advised to reverse the dosage. Everyone's a winner. Fever Pitch. JK.

TIDAL - Silent Knife Speaks CS.

There's something inexplicably unsettling about this first effort from **Tidal**. It's not that it's dark really (murky definitely), but it moves at a sort of brooding, slow and uneasy pace with low, minimalistic drones and rumbles and breathy "life-support" noises being counterpointed by some rather eerie slithering, backward sounds and re-coiling echoey resonances. Over the four tracks presented, changes may come and go in subtle shifts and melting patterns, and to play it as background music will be to miss much of what it has to offer. In the end, the effect can be likened to slowly crawling through a dimly lit, cramped tunnel with the overwhelming feeling that something horrific is behind you. You're

not exactly sure just what it is, but you're damn sure you don't want to find out. Very promising material that's recommended to fans of the more ambient **Aube** material (*Magnetostriction* for example), **Final**, and those not prone to panicky fits of claustrophobia. **Tidal**, PO Box 472 Syracuse, NY. 13209-0472. JM.

MARK TINDLE - Ritual Structures CD.

At its best, *Ritual Structures* creates a sense of extreme vulnerability, of a chill so intense it consumes all the warmth of life, leaving you totally unprotected from these unsettling sounds of deep space or uncharted polar regions. Fragile keyboards flicker like the aurora borealis or a nebula in the background while a distorted (or otherwise manipulated) bass guitar piles layer upon layer of frigid, resonant tones on all sides. Several tracks, especially the beautiful "Cloud Messenger," with its chill vapors wrapped around a dark cloud-seed and rumbling drones, feature wond/flute styled sounds as well. Unfortunately, two tracks fall a bit flat. The title cut attempts to unite ancient chants from Tibetan monks with future sounds of electronics and chill guitar, but just ends up sounding like a very jumbled present. The last track, "Archeozoic," starts off with the bang of primordial lightning that sparked the birth of life, then moves into a steady heart-like beat and drones/metal bowings that cyclically build and fade, perhaps representing the changing tides or evolution over geological time. That's a cool concept, but very little else is added over the course of the song, and it just can't sustain interest on its own past more than the first couple track's 22 minutes (total album time is about 64 minutes). Still worth checking out if you enjoy fragile guitar soundscapes and coldwave ambient. Ancient Sun Music. DA.

TORTURE CHAMBER/GRUNTSPLATTER - Bisect split CS.

Denver's **Torture Chamber** is probably one of the best attempts at European style power electronics/death industrial I've heard from the States. Despite the rather muddled sound quality (mostly due to the fact it was recorded live), its intensity level is hard to ignore...lots of subversive samples and pulsating layers of punishing electronics, plus commanding, treated vocals, all used in a direct and raw manner that I found to be highly provocative and stimulating. **Torture Chamber's** got some serious fucking balls and I'm dying to hear what a couple hours in a studio would result in. (though their biography seems to hint that that won't happen). I found it more difficult to get as enthusiastic about **Gruntsplatter's** side, though it starts off promising enough with a superb track of dark, turbulent atmospheres and heavy percussion, before slipping into weaker variations on a similar theme. Some serious heavy guitar and electronic processing going on here, lots of reverberating string scrapes and thick swirls, plus some distorted movie/media/vocal bites and some rather badly programmed percussion woven in for "good" measure. Often horrific and claustrophobically nightmarish, but ultimately rather poorly recorded and mixed, with the potential shown in the first track failing to materialize as it unravels (though absolutely loved the fourth track "Tumult"). Still, very encouraging material

worthy of dissection (or is that bisection?). Crionic Mind c/o Scott, 3841 4th Ave. #2666, San Diego, CA. 92103. JM.

TOY BIZARRE - KDI DCTB 02 CS.

"Sound illustration of an oppressive short story where the orchestra is nothing else but the world that surrounds us". So reads one of the inserts to this beautifully packaged cassettes -- 90 minutes' worth of twilight noises, ceaseless, maddening drones, and musical minutiae collaged from stolen moments of life. Another insert details the "instruments" used on each of these songs (which apparently correspond to chapters in the enclosed booklet-length short story -- unfortunately I read minimal French, so it's damned hard for me to say what the story's about, aside from that the first sentence reads something like "Each day, he starts again to question his life."); a typical song includes wood, stones, tape noises, feedback, metal boxes, polystyrene, and bass. Needless to say, this tape has a certain enigmatic quality to it, which is all the more intriguing because it is composed from the most everyday of sounds. Listening to it forces you to consider everything in a new, slightly suspicious light, and it reminded me of the disoriented feeling one gets from watching a movie like "Jacob's Ladder", in which you're never quite sure where reality lies (or doesn't), or "Scanners", where you never know who's going to try to blow your head apart. Paranoia has something to do with it -- a relentless feeling that the never-ending black rut you find yourself in will in fact never end, and that every smile hides mockery, every sunny day blindness, and as every voice you hear distorts into unintelligibility, including your own, you become more and more a confined animal pacing the cage of your life, seeking any tiny crack into which to force your thrice-broken fingers, and with your cracked, bleeding nails pry the opening wide enough that you can make your final, desperate bid for freedom. That's how I wrote this story in my head as I heard it, anyway. Although it starts innocuously enough, with mild drones and sunny outdoor sounds (water, frogs, bees, dogs), the darkness soon closes in. The breaths of people sleeping twist to monsters stirring, and you cannot sleep with them in the same room as you. Crickets swarm and drone outside your window like locusts devouring the crops; people speak to you, but their voices shatter like sun against the lake's surface, and none of what they say reaches the shrouded depths of your mind. Birds swing sweetly, but inevitably a menacing drone reaches out and slaps them from their perches, filling you with foreboding. A storm looms in the distance, a livid gray-green upon the horizon; alarms sound, worried voices babble, and as you crush and recrush the Styrofoam coffee cup in your sweaty palms, your heart beats faster and faster -- but for you, there is no release. All is cold, then, empty and silent. But, somewhere you find the strength to push back against the walls pressing in upon your skull; you break free and drift upon the ocean, letting the sound of its soothing waves wash the fear out of you. You have reached the primal jungle, the place of acceptance of all your emotions. The old motor sputters as you guide your small boat upstream, deeper into the warm, green dark, until you reach the clearing and join the

endless, pounding dance. Buy this, but listen to it with extreme care. Available for \$11.00ppd (or 55FF) from: Cynistrose, 5 Impasse des Moineaux, 87100 Limoges France. DA.

TRIBES OF NEUROT - :Rebegin: 2x7"

Not content to rest on the laurels of their debut CD for Relapse, **Tribes of Neurot** quickly rebound with this four sided slab of vinyl for the ever-growing and expanding Alleysweeper label. Split between live and studio recordings, they are the musical rantings of minds plagued with sickness. This is not to be taken disparagingly mind you, for that is its very charm. Whether revolving around celebratory, ritualistic percussion, strangely grotesque and warped loops, or non-melodious unstable "rock" (and I use that term loosely), it's a lapse into severe dementia, a trip into lunacy, and a complete and utter shattering of sanity. Oh, and its also good. Alleysweeper. JM.

TRIBES OF NEUROT - Silver Blood Transmission CD.

Good lord! It seems like the gentlemen of the band **Neurosis** have been popping the peyote buttons again, tripping away on the new release of their project **Tribes of Neurot**. *Silver Blood Transmission* is a journey through tension building noise structures surrounded by strong tribal rhythms, things **Neurosis** have touched on before, especially at live shows, but this is the full outcome of another means of expression for **Neurosis**. *Silver Blood Transmission* starts off with two songs called "Primordial Uncarved Block," and "Wolf Lava" which are very low key, ethnic tribal loops that skillfully make the listener somewhat comfortable within these new sound dimensions. Then the third song "Fires of

Purification" starts a chaotic process of a multiple drum tribal frenzy with searing noises that zone in and out of the song structure, altering the listeners perception with a hypnotic ritual soundscape. Later on within the album is a song called "Achtwan", an extremely long, low key repetitive work that poses a sort of challenge to the listeners attention span. The results of actually sitting through these 25 minutes until the abrupt, almost piercing sounding ending is satisfying because you understand what the band was trying to achieve and why they chose to do it with such a long piece. Most of the songs were recorded in the bands own studios, with a few taken from live **Neurosis** shows. But the production has a very organic feel to it, giving the impression of multiple fireside performances within vast fields of sacred lands. Relapse. NE.

TRIO NOCTURNA - Tears of Light CS.

Early morning grey; light misting of rain and biting wind. Colder than the weather, though, these bittersweet memories of centuries past, melancholy thoughts of nights no longer warmed with love, castles ruined and glories faded. Such are the emotions **Trio Nocturna** evokes with their unique brand of Celtic gothic -- ancient music for modern times with a heart of pagan magic. They're the only "gothic" band I know led by Celtic harp, whose enchanted strings spin a gossamer web of melody, anchored by subdued keyboards and bejeweled with gentle violin and achingly sweet female vocals. A few of the songs bring to mind the 70's band **Renaissance** (if anyone still remembers them), others the dark folk of **Sol Invictus** or **Current 93**. To my taste, the band works best on the traditional tunes they

re-arrange, such as "Cruel Mother," "She Moved Through the Fair," and "Twa Corbies." On some of the other offerings the vocals don't mesh well with the instruments, holding them back from soaring as high as they otherwise might. Still, the overall feeling is exquisite for those who favor a quietly shadowed mood. Fans of gothic artist Leilah Wendell will enjoy the tune she co-wrote with Thomas Dodd (lyricist and harpist for **Trio Nocturna**) entitled "Heavy Halos": "death is weeping...tears of light." Wendell also contributed the lovely cover art for the tape (which may also be available as a CD; contact the band for more info). **Trio Nocturna** c/o Thomas Dodd, PO Box 52580, Atlanta, GA. 30355.

ULTRASOUND - Woonsocket LP.

This is an interesting little LP: partly **Eno**, partly **Mazzy Star**, partly **Organum** or something. The first cut sounds like it could've been lifted straight from **Eno's Music For Films**. It's a relaxed and slow drone piece of ambient guitar noise with gentle acoustic guitar plucking underneath. The next track features muffled female vocal, a strummy electronic guitar, and drums. Some ribbons loopy moogisms or guitarism of ambience are interspersed. The flip side is an airy, drippy, extended atmospheric environmental piece made up of residual bonging noise with heavy water ploppings in the mix. OK. Autonomy, PO Box 49814, Austin TX. 78765. E-mail silence@mail.utexas.edu. TJ.

VAGINA DENTATA ORGAN - Un Chien Catalan CD.

Jordi Vallis pulls another fast one, only this time we get a CD instead of a picture disc. If it



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were'n't for all of the French text and cryptic graphics in the booklet, you could probably sell this one at a Harley Davidson rally, since the majority of this 66 minute recording consists of a single sound sample: a loud motorcycle engine. If you don't have any bikers in your neighborhood and your lawnmower is really quiet, you might want to consider investing in this CD, the rest of you are advised to get your kicks elsewhere. WSNS - PO Box 116, London N19 5DZ UK. JS.

VIDNAOBMANA - The River of Appearance CD.

From the bright sunrise keyboard loops and rainsticks of the opening "Angelic Appearance", to the twilight melancholy tones of the closing "The Ominous Dwelling," vidnaObmana's *The River of Appearance* blends meticulously layered electronics with carefully chosen acoustic instruments ("Five rainsticks in different tunings", Bolivian and bamboo flutes, clay pipe-whistle ocarina, etc) to communicate feelings of serenity and deep harmony with self and surroundings. As with most ambient compositions, *The River of Appearance* flows on many levels, and rewards repeated listens with new discoveries. vidnaObmana's frequent use of loops paired with ever-expanding ripples of slightly modified keyboard textures and varied acoustic highlights creates a sense of circles within circles, ever changing and ever the same like the seasons, at once disturbing and smoothing the deep pool of complex emotion from which his work is drawn. On "Ephemeral Vision", for instance waxing and waning keyboard loops form the foundation on which vidnaObmana layers first rainstick sounds, then flute/ocarina and other instruments, ending with maracas, slowing fading into the distance like a memory of fleetingly grasped beauty. Though many tracks speak in emotions only, some pain clear visions as well. The steady, solemn keyboards and rainsticks of "Night-blooming" slowly swell in volume and complexity, blossoming to fill the entire space of the recording with gentle beauty while flutes/ocarinas echo from the edges like the trills of darting birds alighting now here, now there to sample the sweet nectar of the night blooms. And the precise, crystalline piano keystrokes of "Streamers of Stillness" dance lightly on the crests of slight swells rolling upon a gentle river, rocking your tiny boat as dark currents of half-heard sorrowful keyboards roll beneath and hypnotic flute-breaths float down from the sloping cliffs above the moonlit river. vidnaObmana describes *The River of Appearance* as a return to the minimal, serene character of his earlier work. His recent collaboration with Steve Roach on *Well of Souls* seems also to have had a strong influence, encouraging vidna to explore the use of tribal acoustic textures as well as his customary keyboard loops. This welcome combination of approaches has produced a hauntingly lovely, hour long meditation that imparts a welcome sense of serenity, a chance to pause from the daily frenzy and savor the subtle fragrance of a night-blooming flower or the beauty of moonlight on moving water. I think you'll find it an hour more than well spent. Projekt. DA.

VOICE OF EYE/LIFEGARDEN - The

Hungry Void Volume Two: Air CD.

With both this and *Transmigration* arriving at the same time, I feel I've died and gone to heaven. This CD is a long and seamless, drifts wash in contrast with *Transmigration*, which climaxes dramatically several times over its length. The liner notes sayeth: "Composed, performed, and recorded by: Su Ling, Jim Wilson, Bill Yanok, Bonnie McNairn, David Oliphant, Peter Ragan; All sounds on this recording were created through live group improvisation using a wide variety of instruments, female/male voices, and live digital loops, all modified with various multi-effect processors. No keyboards or samplers were used; etc" If only Hafler Trio could be this succinct and Lustmord be this unpretentious. It's easy to imagine Oliphant, McNairn, and Co. with their eyes rolled back into their skulls, channeling the spirits of the Earth and letting them have a go at it. There are 10 tracks on this CD, but it plays out like one huge long one...very busy, but with the sound level about the same throughout. There is a net ambience, but with an edge: maybe a bed of sharp metal objets and splinters rather than a pillow of clouds to drift off in. The group is jamming, no waves of sound to latch onto and anticipate with repeated listens...we are willing participants in their dream time together. A great shambling shamanistic percussion track is present nearly throughout the work, with all the myriad haunting noise the collective can muster interweaving. Occasional chanting, scraping objects, rain sticks, whale calls, woodwind blasts and such distinguish themselves in the sound web. "Worlds Whirl" by Life Garden is a good comparison probably. They've achieved an organic, ritualistic vibe or a tribal groove here, not random noise. Cyclotron/Agni Music. TJ.

VOICE OF EYE- Transmigration CD

This is probably the favorite band of this zine (if you couldn't tell). The mighty Voice of Eye return with another masterwork of delicious and joyfully thunderous noises. Acoustic instruments are played, processed (*lots* of echo), and densely layered; the horns are especially memorable. Track one is a collection of swarms -- a presentation of pure sound, one part in a swarm of horns, then of cowbells in a percussive racket, then of voices -- mostly sounding like layered Bonnie. This is swelling, pulsing, inundating, living music, flowing in and around, working its way into all the nooks and crannies of your listening space. Track two is more tribally oriented, with a loud and ominous stringed instrument like sound carried along with percussion and woodwind. Track three uses deep droning horn sounds (in varying speeds) as its basis; swooping around so much in broad strokes it reminded me of plane flying over head. Track four is a richly textured aggregate of all of the above, while track five is a nice space march piece with distorted drums. And finally, the last track is a traditional-type space-out similar in vein to *Lightwave* (but much stronger), carrying the listener along in huge, metallic, spacey waves. God this is beautiful. Cyclotron. TJ.

VROMB - Le Facteur Humain CD.

It's been a long wait for Vromb's follow-up to his successful *Jeux de Terre* debut for Tesco, and the buzz surrounding the release of this new disc for Ant-Zen has grown steadily in the last few months. The *Transmodulation 7* was a nice treat, but it was hardly enough to satisfy the gnawing hunger for more of those fat, analog sounds we've come to love. So, here we are with a full plate of Vromb before us, presented beautifully in a limited edition oversized, fold out booklet (approx. 6" by 6"), within which lies a postcard, a CD 'natch, and a normal CD book with liner notes and pertinent details. To top it off, there's a small Vromb pin that pierces the book and is attached on the otherside to seal it shut. An alternate jewel box version was made, but this special edition is so cool that I suggest you try and find one of its limited 505 copies to coincide with the equally high quality packaging of *Jeux de Terre*. Musically, we're hearing a Vromb that's moved above ground, away from the mysterious insect world of *Jeux de Terre*, and into a world of paranormal, extra sensory sensations...a new dimension suddenly revealed by the throbbing, relentless frequency pulsations being emitted by Vromb. The liner notes themselves tell the tale of fictitious experimenter Heurel Gaudot, who designed a "ultrasonic wave amplifying helmet" to stimulate a dormant gland within the brain, which once awoken, opens new doors of perception and allows whoever is wearing the helmet to experience very real hallucinatory visions. If you've ever seen the movie 'From Beyond' (or read the original H.P. Lovecraft story for that matter) you'll see the parallels. There's a written attempt by Vromb to tie all this into the title and theme of the CD (ie The Human Factor), but I confess to being more confused by it then enlightened. But, enough of all that, let's get to what's most important in all of this, the music. If you heard either the track on *Invisible Domains* or the *Transmodulations 7*, you'll know the direction in which Vromb is headed...a spacier, more rhythmic sound that's derived entirely from the recognizable analog synths Vromb is known for. There's no beat per se, just varying sequences of driving heartbeat like thumps percolating beneath a thick bed of fluttering, obese frequencies and radioactive electronics. With said rhythms propelling it, *Le Facteur Humain* is a faster paced CD than *Jeux de Terre*, and it's easy to get caught up in its forward moving thrusts. All the while, modulating tones attack from left and right and above and below, sometimes becoming quite singular to form a cold and barren ambience, but mostly preferring to congregate in fluctuating, stormy masses with squiggly highs and atmospheric lows constantly battling for attention. My only complaint initially would be the little distinction between some tracks, but that seemed to disappear as I became more familiar with each song. Wish I could go into even more detail, but this was another late entry. Rest assured Vromb heads, it was well worth the wait! Highly recommended. Ant-Zen. JM.

VROMB - TRANSMODULATION A.M.P. 7" Not quite the Vromb of *Jeux de Terre* fame, this is decidedly more rhythmic and driving. Yes, there is a beat...but instead of being the

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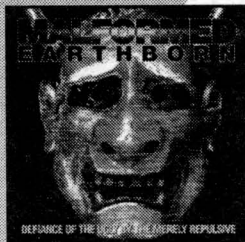
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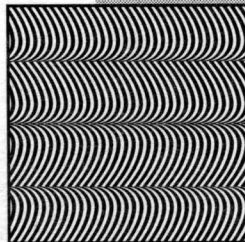
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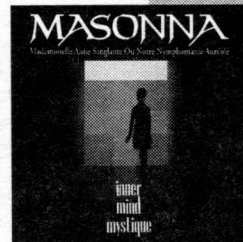
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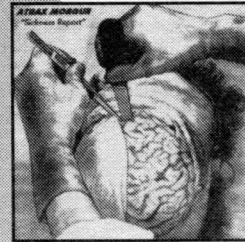
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RELEASE

prominent element on these two tracks, it serves more as a propeller for the fat, squiggly, and crisp analog frequencies that surround it. I'm a huge fan of **Vromb**, and didn't walk away disappointed with this, and I suspect you won't either. Ant-Zen. JM.

WALDTEUFEL - Der Grosse Rausch 7".

A strange offering from Markus Wolff of **Crash Worship** and some unknown friends. Most of the text is in German (despite this being an American release), so exact details are sketchy, but it appears to be dedicated to Carl Off, whoever that is?? At any rate, I can't imagine it'll appeal too much to **Crash Worship** enthusiasts. There's percussion on both sides, but it's slow and kind of minimalistic and neither powerful nor very interesting. The one side is comprised mainly of an accordion, some repetitive cow-bell rings, some kettle drum thumpings and a sad, violin accompaniment. Before you even get a chance to figure out it's purpose or where it might be heading, it's over! Just like that. A grumbled "that's it?" was about all I could muster.... surely they'd redeem themselves on the other side? Um, no, not quite. Better though, with vocal chants and slightly more active military like drumming, but downright bizarre, pointless, and incomprehensible as far as I'm concerned. Worth avoiding. Volkways, PO Box 72525, New Orleans, LA. 70172-2525. JM.

TIM WALTERS - The Dry Well CD.

Always nice to see a new label starting off strongly and Core Dump has done just that with **Tim Walter's** debut CD. This is effectively broken down into two sections, the first of which is based on the Epic of Gilgamesh and features three dynamic and abstract compositions that evolve slowly but possess a high degree of vividness (is that a word?) and kinetic energy. Like darkness eclipsing light, reverbed clangs, twangy swirls, textures, and chimes emerge from the vortex and take on a palpable presence. The sometimes **Diamanda Galas** vocals of Kee Kille in "Descent of Inanna" are haunting and memorable and certainly a highlight in all of this. The second half, likewise comprised of three pieces, is produced solely from an African Kalimba (one of those small piano type thingy's you pluck with your fingers or thumb). While theoretically interesting and striking for the many dynamics Walters manages to draw from it (particularly in the final track...which seems to defy logic with its thick, claustrophobic atmospheres), its ultimately less engaging and somewhat anti-climatic in contrast to its predecessors. Still, in a genre bulging with self-proclaimed explorers and innovators, Walters, with a single release, has propelled himself to the head of the pack. Core Dump Records. JM.

WINDOWPAIN INDUSTRIES - Your Landmine Is My Oasis LP

For those of you who don't know, **Windowpain Industries** was featured in our first issue alongside **Belt**, **IOS**, and **Big City Orchestra**. Steve promptly and inexplicably disappeared after that, but has finally resurfaced (4 something years later) with the release of his first full length and self released LP. Not much has changed in that time...he's still creating

puzzling, loosely structured and free flowing songs comprised of tape manipulations, guitar frettings and free form solos, a drum machine, a flute, and whatever else makes itself available. At it's worst, it's quirky, silly, and beyond comprehension ("Ode to Benny Hill", "No Wind From Rain"), at it's best well composed, engaging, and even melodic (the sultry and shadowed atmospheres of "Owls and Blind Wolves," the delicate and beautiful guitar dynamics of "Windowpain," and the surreal, morphing soundscape of "Gradual Decay"). Windowpain Industries c/o Stephen Abbate, 1581 34th Ave., San Francisco, CA. 94122. JM.

WOLVERINE - Chapter CS.

A cassette of slow, impermeable doom... power electronics so heavy and suffocatingly dark its as if death himself is staring you in the face. You could fight it, but fighting is futile...accept the inevitable and let those icy fingers wrap themselves around your soul. Ahh, now isn't that better? OK, so maybe that's a bit of an exaggeration...but this remains one of the most condemning, doomy releases I've heard, period...even more so than the cassette released by their current namesake **Predominance**, whom I raved about last issue. A lazy comparison would perhaps be early **Mashinenzimmer 412**, but whereas they were always cold, soulless, and machinic... **Wolverine** is much more bloodthirsty and vibrant, exuding strength with rigid, repetitive pelts of percussion and forcible, burrowing electronics. May not suit everyone's tastes, but I found it to be one of the most exceptional things to cross my path this year. Mandatory. L.O.K.I. JM.

WOMB - Rude Emergencies CS.

Womb is the end product of a collaboration between harsh noise outfit **Bacillus** and the more sordid, bass heavy "ambience" (strictly comparatively speaking) of Bryce Eiman's **Erosore**. It's a bit short at twenty minutes, but stuffed to the brim with a multitude of layers and sonic turbulence. For fun, fuck with the equalizer while playing this and check out the zillion different dynamics taking place; on the low end of the spectrum there's a roaring, perpetual gush of deep atmospheres, while over top, representing the higher end of things, endless spats of demolishing noise and cluttered chaos. As they converge, each tends to sort of cancel each other out, leaving an all encompassing, churning, swirling, diving blockade of impermeable sound. A perfect cassette for those uninitiated into the noise world but who feel daring enough to explore the more palatable aspects of the genre. Clotted Meat Portioning. JM.

XCRETERIA VOLUME ONE - Various Artists CS.

A comprehensive sampler of underground experimental sound sculptures, noise, and dark ambient artists living and working in (mostly) Southern Ontario Canada. Competently compiled by Richard Oddie of **Orphx**, the majority of it features a host of unknown and/or undiscovered bands: **Deconstruct**, **Palate Clamp**, **Mind Skelp-Cher**, **Tropism**, **The Infant Cycle**, **O Huge Vault of Vasoline**,

Focus 23 and more. The list of more notable names is considerably shorter, but it includes **Orphx**, **Photophobia**, and **Decibel Orgy**, the latter two being the only exception to the otherwise all Canadian line-up. It appears there's a rather healthy scene happening up there and, with very few exceptions, I was really impressed by the overall quality of the material featured. A quick run down of some of side A's finer points includes **Focus 23's** deep ambience and deadening, monstrosity heavy boom, **Orphx's** absorbing live piece of fluctuating, reverberantly raw and hollow textures, **Photophobia's** incredible abyssmal sounds (this guy rules!), and thee Plebs minimalistic, but effective tonal drifts. Side B also contains it's fair share of note worthy submissions...a track of humming, factory-like ambience from the **Infant Cycle**, a superb piece of rhythmic and doomy death-industrial from **Mind Skelp-cher**, and a track of low level drones and surreality from **Paratickecip**. I've got an absolute ton of tapes attempting to do what this one does...some of which are even halfway decent, but none of which come close to being this good. Sure, there's some dogs in here...bands destined for obscurity (**Tropism**, **Inadequate** one or two more) and not much more, but there's also more than enough genuine gems to overshadow their failed efforts. Comes in a paper envelope with a metal object and 22 page booklet with graphics and info from each project. Limited 100 copies. Xcreteria. JM.

YEN POX - Deliver/Remove 7".

Coinciding almost perfectly with the release of **Blood Music** (the two were released within a weeks time), **Deliver** stylistically lies somewhere between their debut cassette and that CD. It's more dynamic and expansive than **Blood Music**, yet retaining much of the suffocating, all encompassing darkness of it. Slap on side A and you're transported off into a vacuumous black hole, deposited, and left to swim in an endless downward spiraling void. Simply an incredible piece, dense, droney and radiant with dark energy -- as if the sun were suddenly eclipsed by a looming, blood red orb and the world were cast under a liquidous murky glow. "Remove" is more claustrophobic and focused...exploring outer dimensions while simultaneously probing the inner mind with high end drones and lower level atmospheres. I've heard the **Lustmord** comparisons, but can only reply with an emphatic "fuck that". Brian can only dream of having the dimensional and dynamic intensity that **Yen Pox** does....but then, maybe I'm could be just a wee bit biased. 250 copies made... don't be a dope and miss out. Drone Records. JM.

ZOVIET FRANCE/ JIM O'ROURKE/ HAFLER TRIO - Unentitled CD.

One track (ca. 20 minutes each) is devoted to each artists. The **Zoviet France** piece sounds a heck of a lot like the material on *What Is Not True* -- i.e. very spacey overlapping plains of sound; but its still shockingly different from the stuff they were putting out in earlier years. In contrast, their early to mid period material emphasized homemade instruments and voice processed beyond recognition into an eerie something. The piece here sounds to me like

it's almost entirely electronically generated, and maybe borrows a sound effect or three (stock spacey warbles) from techno-oriented ambience as it gently pulses and trances along for its entire length. Different sounds and samples appear, loop around, and are gently folded into the overall rhythm. There's also parts of this that would be at home on a mellow electronics new age release. It's a little less warm and fuzzy than the *Zoviet France* of old, but some vestigial Zoviet Francisms remain, and its still a killa, going straight to the cerebral cortex and lodging there. **Jim O'Rourke** (in musical, rather than environmental noodling mode) creates a subtle blend of radio static, distortion, and guitar effects on the same level of intensity as **PGR** (see *A Hole of Unknown Depth*). But O'Rourke is more of a samplify, grab-bag kind of guy. Both O'Rourke and Cascone dabble in prepared guitar, which makes me think they ought to face off on a release. Other musicians help out -- a piano plays distantly and dreamily in the background, some woodwinds sneak up on you then pounce all at once, sounding like air being let out of a balloon or a Biota record at 78rpm. **The Hafler Trio** disgorge a series of geometrical tones that surge in and out, overlapping and cascading, by turns shrill and rumbling. It bears a resemblance to recent releases by **Antigrup**, but the Hafler's stuff here is more active. This is attack ambience (industrial?); you feel it in your bones -- instead of in your subconscious (like *Zoviet France*), or instead of in the foundations of your home (like **Koner**), or from the netherworld (like **Lustmord**). The tones used are similar to those they've (or rather he's) always used, but these have a bit more edge. These, PO Box 4412, London, SW8 2XJ, United Kingdom. TJ.

ZOVIET FRANCE - Popular Soviet Songs and Other Youth Music 3xCD.

For a one sentence description of this limited edition three-disc, nearly three hour set, I couldn't do much better than Soleilmoon's press release: "an excursion into the kitchen of *Zoviet France*, into a place where one could observe the making of new songs....the song in progress". In this unparalleled collection (a re-release of 1985 cassettes nearly impossible to find today), one can hear these legends of the ambient industrial genre at work and play. Different tracks explore the same themes from various musical points of view; ideas are picked up, examined, dropped, then picked up again later and reworked. Tracks ranged from hushed ambient noise pieces like "Veil" to noisy industrial bangings and clangings like "Yezidi" (both these songs appear in altered forms on all three discs), many with the trademark Middle Eastern tinge that lends such an exotic to ZF's (and now **Rapoon's**) work. Quality ranges from raw to highly polished, but even the "dud" shots here are interesting in showing you what the group was aiming at. For my money, the dark and tribal ambient pieces ranked highest, although the band's exploration of various ways to exploit the sounds of metal strings ("Ram" on disc two and "Chirm Ela" on disc three) and of electronic static as simultaneously emulating crackling fire embers and freezing ice crystals ("Spin Hellisein" on disc one, "Burning Bush" on disc three etc.) seemed especially provocative from the ambient industrial zones.

Listening to these songs is like accompanying a brilliant urban photographer on a walk through the city, noting carefully every place they pause, every view they stop to ponder. Sometimes if you try to see through their eyes you see nothing, but sometimes with their critical insight to guide you marvels appear in everyday vistas. A must for ZF fans, but also invaluable for anyone interested in watching ambient industrial musicians sift through sonic rubble to construct their unique atmospheres of urban decay. Soleilmoon/Staalplaat. DA

NEW RELEASES AND OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

The following arrived to late to be fully reviewed or I just couldn't manage to squeeze them in... but, pretty much all are worth tracking down and/or picking up if given the opportunity (that is, if they sound appealing to your tastebuds) ...full reviews most likely to follow in Issue 8. JM.

ATROX - Time is Now PicLP.

Crunchy and high voltage electronics with the occasional distorted rhythm and atmospheric interlude...reminds me of **P.A.L.**, **Nimoy** or similar outputs from Ant-Zen. Steinklang Records. JM.

BAND OF PAIN - To Whom it May Concern 7".

A really good 7" that proves their track on *Seedmouth* wasn't a fluke, offering two sides of brooding dark ambience and echoed guitar drones... sort of akin to what **Maeror Tri** might be like were they to incorporate keyboards into their sound. Obuh Records - PO Box 338, 20-950 Lublin 1, Poland. Got mine from Anomalous.

IN STAHLGEWITTERN - Various Artists 3 X LP.

A ton of German and Austrian power electronic outfits spread out over 6 sides of vinyl and packaged in a sturdy metal box. A mixture of new and previously released material from: **Dagda Mor**, **Telepherique**, **Soldnergeist**, **Allerseelen** (the best track I've ever heard from them), **Atrox**, **Nimoy**, **SALT**, **Drape Excrement** and more. Steinklang Records.

LIFE AFTER FALLOUT/ODLAND - Various Artists CS.

I'm allergic to dust and break out in hives whenever I encounter it, so when this thing arrived intentionally smothered in it I wasn't all that pleased....in fact, I itched the whole time I was listening to it! Anyway, it's an overall solid compilation of post nuclear atmospheres (ie. dark ambient/ ritualistic/ death industrial) featuring works from: **Third Eye (Megaptera)**, **Shatterer of Earth/Sandkunst** (absolutely incredible), **Delphium**, **Obscene Noise Cooperation (Megaptera again)**, **Conscentia Peccati**, **No Festival of Light**, **Advokat Ihrer Hohheit**, and more. Some work around the concept incredibly well, others seem to stray a bit and miss the mark, but needless to say there's some real gems in here you don't want to miss. Art Konkret.

MORTIIS - Crypt of the Wizard CD.

A collection of five 7" releases put onto CD, *Crypt of the Wizard* is probably my favorite **Mortiis** release to date (though keep in mind, under normal circumstances, **Mortiis** and favorite aren't words I'd typically use in the same sentence!). Not so much noteworthy for the strength of the material (aside from select tracks, much of it stays pretty true to form), but rather for the shortness of the pieces. Instead of the normal offering of two extended and drawn out meanderings, *Crypt of the Wizard* is comprised of 10 songs in total, each of which averages between 5-8 minutes in length. Thus, the prospects of being bored are significantly reduced. Still, **Mortiis** is **Mortiis**, and if you haven't liked what you've heard in the past, then chances are you won't like this. Do as you see fit. Dark Dungeon Music.

NOISE FACTORY '95 - Various Artists Collaborative CD.

13 musicians ranging from Stefan Knappe of **Maeror Tri**, to Y-Ton-G and Stefan Rossow of **Para-Noise-Terminal**, to Andrea Borner of **Templegardens** and **Ars Moriendi**, holed themselves in a old house with a multitude of instruments for 8 days and 7 nights (!) to exchange ideas, collaborate and otherwise 'jam', the highlights of which have been placed onto disc courtesy of Stein Sein Productions. About as amazing as you'd expect...71 minutes of drones, loops, cavernous atmospheres, hallucinogenic occurrences, dark ambience, surreal sound gymnastics, organic textures, etc etc Stunning, complex, and exploratory music for the cerebral cortex. Stein Sein Productions.

SSHE RETINA STIMULANTS/IUGULA THOR - Wrist CD.

Nicely packaged in a fold out sleeve, with lots of pictures and captivating text, this split CD begins with four bruisers from **Sshe Retina Stimulants**. With a sterilizing clean production to stand behind, the sounds being emitted are made all the more pulverizing...pure frequencies and consonant tones that rake at the nerves with each overloaded peak. Power electronics, yes, but at times so resounding, as in "Hardcore Deprivation Audience", that it takes on an almost atmospheric and spacey edge! **Iugula Thor** is considerably more coarse and sordid ...five sadistic tracks of heavy electronics completely dominated by fuzzy distortion, scraping feedback outbursts, and processed vocals that'll have you either rejoicing in perverse ecstasy or writhing in severe pain. Your choice. Ant-Zen.

SANCTUM - Lupus In Fabula CD.

I had no idea what to expect from this group, but I must admit to being surprised by how good it is. Stylistically, we're talking about a complete clash of styles...a fusion of edgy 'industrial', dark orchestrations, driving rhythms, quirky noises, pop sensibilities, strange atmospheres, and fragile gothic delicacies... something like a cross between **Mental Destruction**, **Dead Can Dance**, and **Devil Doll**, if you can imagine that! Each piece carries a spirit and mood entirely all it's own, yet the whole thing holds itself together amazingly well. As to who it may appeal to exactly? Mostly just those with an open mind. Definitely worth exploring. CMI.

TURBUND STURMWERK - S/T LP.

Stormy atmospheres and majestic orchestrations, with a strong political vibe underlying it all. L.O.K.I. Foundation.

ZINES

I have a hard time criticizing zines, and I tend to like most all that I see. But certain ones definitely stand out as my favorites, and **Eskhatos** is certainly among them. Curator Ares Solis does a more than commendable job of covering the electronic/industrial/experimental (etc) underground and you'll find many of the same products reviewed there as you will in here. Nice long-ish reviews too, not the dinky 5 line crap people pass off as reviews nowadays. Featured in issue two was an interview with **Lustmord** (who, for once, actually seemed rather congenial and down to Earth), **Mick Harris**, **Glod**, and **Mourning Cloak**. Plus the conclusion of an article on Non-Lethal Weapons, an interview with the author of *Nuclear War and You* (Jerrold Richards), news and propaganda, thoughts, and other things relating to or concerning the end of mankind. The presentation and general layout is absolutely superb and awe inspiring to those of us trying to achieve a similar effect. This one came with a free, limited edition 7" from **Mourning Cloak**. You'll hear no complaints from me. PO Box 961, Portland, OR. 97207 USA. E-mail: Eskhatos@ix.netcom.com

The Rape of Angel's is a well done monthly newsletter put out by Mark Solotroff and Megan Emish of **Bloodyminded/Bloodlust!** Typically 4 pages in length, they pretty much review only things they like (a good idea, as it saves space that way), most of which is black metal, grind-core, noise, and power electronics. The reviews are in-depth and informative, and pretty straightforward, and best of all, with absolutely no pretentious overtones. The introductions are kind of cool too, as Mark usually details the various gigs he's been to or is putting on (one of the more recent ones being the **Orphx/Sshe Retina Stimulants** show a few months back). He also runs a respectable (mostly limited edition tape) label, though prices leave something to be desired. At any rate, it's a good way to keep abreast of the latest happenings and releases in the seedier and more brutal side of the underground. Best not to write **The Rape of Angels** on the envelope as some puritan at the post office may see fit to dispose of your letter (try T.R.O.A. or **Bloodlust!** instead) PO Box 7962, J.A.F. Station., New York, NY. 10116 USA.

Belgium's **Tanz Der Rosen** is another one of my favorites...a small, digest size zine, written in (near-perfect) English, and covering a broad range of underground experimental, noise, and industrial sounds. Last issue had a nifty article on **Yen Pox**, plus interviews with **Alio Die**, **Rapoon**, **Stefan Knappe** of **Drone Records/Maeror Tri**, and an ingenious one with Peter Keller of **Bacillus**. There was also a report from the Heavy Electronics Festival II (featuring the **Grey Wolves**, **Satori**, **Anenzephalia**, and more) and lots of news, updates, and reviews. Next issue is in the works according to Guido, and again looks to be

promising with features on **Aube**, **BCO**, **Atrax Morgue**, **Praxis Dr. Bearmann**, **Paul Schutze**, and more. TDR - Guido Roelandt, Reynaertpark 204, B-9100 Sint-Niklaas, Belgium.

Three zines from France make me wish I had studied the language more in school...the first is **Omega**...an excellent zine whose focus is more on the deviant side of the underground, with last issue featuring interviews with **The Grey Wolves**, **Blood Axis**, **Smell and Quim**, L.O.K.I. Foundation and more. Very nice presentation, with what looks to be well written reviews and articles. **Omega** - Olivier Philippe, 29 Rue Oberkampf, 68200 Mulhouse France. Hot on it's heels is **Symposium** from Paris, whose layout isn't quite so clean as **Omega's**, but whose focus is a bit broader and more open minded. Last issue had articles on and interviews with **T.G.V.T.**, **Con-Dom**, an excellent break down and review of all Tesco releases (in lieu of the interview that was never sent), **Smell and Quim**, **Crawl Unit** and lots more. Plenty of reviews, news and contact addresses given...a very dedicated zine whose enthusiasm for the underground is truly genuine. **Symposium** - Arnaud Venerandi, 105 Bld. Richard Lenoir, 75011 Paris France. And finally, there's **Ex Machina**, whose layout and presentation is among the best I've seen out of the experimental underground...very clean, with lots of graphics and pictures, it's focus is mostly on the death-industrial/dark ambient side of the spectrum. Last issue I saw had interviews with **Batchas**, **Inanna**, **OYC**, **Death In June**, and **Deutsch Nepal**. This thing makes AD look like shit...I am in awe. **Ex Machina** - Arnaud Clergue, 1, rue Lacroix, 69003 Lyon France.

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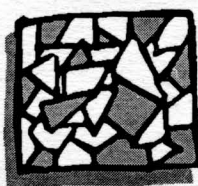
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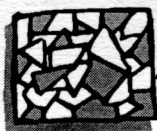
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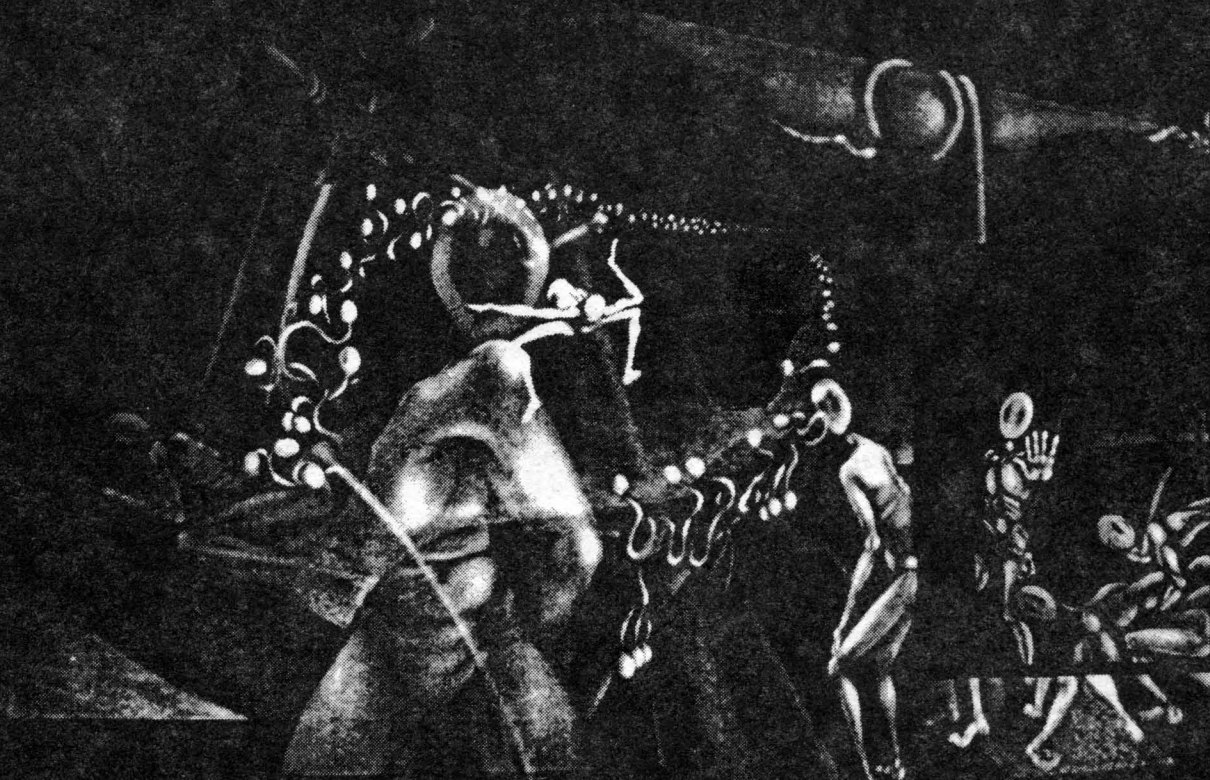
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